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MESSIANIC PHILOSOPHY

AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, AND DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

BY

GIDEON W. B. MARSH

B.A. (LOND.), LIC. MED. AND SURG., AND L.S.A. (LOND.); FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE; FELLOW OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY; SENIOR PRIZEMAN IN MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE (USHAW, 1885)
AUTHOR OF "THE POPES AND THE EARLY CHURCH," "THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, IS IT ...?" "MIRACLES," ETC.

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PREFACE

THE subject of this work is one which appeals to all Christians, irrespective of creed, as it is the foundation of "our common Christianity". The author, in endeavouring to place the arguments for and against his thesis, has freely availed himself of the invaluable services rendered to the elucidation of the discussion by non-Catholic as well as by Catholic authorities, and he has made copious use of the productions of the leading Agnostic and Rationalistic authors. He begs to make this general acknowledgment of indebtedness to them all. Many references to them by name will be found in the course of the book. Hitherto, for the most part, writers have confined themselves to dealing with various portions of the subject. The author has attempted to place the

entire controversy before his readers in a succinct fashion; and to state in concise terms the considerations and proofs that establish his thesis,—the Divinity of Jesus Christ. In dealing with the Scriptural quotations, he has not entered into the question of their authenticity, as this subject will receive separate treatment in another volume of the present series.

40 Tachbrook Street, London, S.W.
Lent, 1908.

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INTRODUCTION

God and the destiny of man

THERE are no questions which have so deeply engrossed the human race as those regarding the existence of its God, the immortality of man's soul, and the relationship of that soul to its Creator. Life is full of perplexing problems, and we are everywhere confronted with "the Riddle of the Universe," and with sin and suffering. Man's existence as an individual is short, and his days are full of many sorrows and cares. Sunshine and shadow, storm and calm, chequer his career, and his heart is ever restless, ever longing for that which never comes—perfect happiness. The richest and the poorest, the wisest and the most ignorant —all alike must die; all alike seek to live and prolong their sojourn, in hopes of obtaining a few more years of what pleasure life can give them. And in every heart is implanted the mysterious yearning for life after death; in every heart is the fond hope of perfect peace in reunion with those "whom we have loved long since, but lost awhile". And yet amidst it all ever arise the questions, "Is there a God, seeing that the world is so full of evil?"

"Have I an immortal soul, or does all end in death?" The *Daily Telegraph* gave witness some time ago to the truth of our statement, in its long controversy, "Do we believe?" And at the beginning of this twentieth century, there are thousands of honest souls in perplexity about it all, scores of learned sceptics whose cleverly written books make men despair of knowing the truth. Books are written to show that "God" is only "Force," or that He is the "Unknowable," or that in Pantheism we can have our only knowledge of Him. We are told that human and animal souls are only Life, and that Life is but a phenomenon of matter under certain conditions, vanishing when those conditions cease. We read that moral obligations are not of Divine sanction, but only arise from the need of order between man and man. Religion, say they, is but a poetic phase of man's existence, based on nothing better than dead hero worship, or the cult of Nature in its many forms. The countless learned treatises which appear to-day, and are in everybody's hands, would claim to prove convincingly that it is waste of time to concern oneself about another world, about God, the Soul, or Religion. And yet despite all this erudition, there is no man whose mind is not ever asking, "What *am* I to believe?" It is no part of the design of this book to attempt an

Modern views

answer to these subjects. They are being dealt with in the present series, separately, and we must refer to the other volumes for the reply to such questions as "Is there a God?" "Is the human soul immortal?" "Is Revelation possible?" "Are miracles possible?" These are all subjects of profound importance, and each needs a separate and careful explanation. In this work we address ourselves to those who believe in the Infinite and Personal First Cause, with its corollary of the possibility of miracles; to those who believe in the immortality of the soul, with the soul's consequent relationship to God, and its consequent need of Revelation. It falls to our lot here, to answer the important question whether Jesus Christ is God, or in other words, whether the Christian Religion is the Revelation of God to man: for, if the answer be in the affirmative, then God has spoken to His creatures with no faltering voice, and every man is bound by his reason to listen and obey. Christianity comes before the world with a peremptory claim on the obedience of every living soul. It declares from the mountain tops that it, and it alone, possesses the fulness of Divine Revelation; that it, and it alone, has the right to the love and unswerving devotion of the human race; that it, and it alone, is the Divine Witness Whom all must hear and obey. The claims are bold. Is

Nature of Christian claims

the testimony to the justice of these claims equally strong? Let us make the position clear. The Christian Church demands our belief in doctrines which no effort of the unaided human reason could discover, in doctrines which, though not in conflict with reason, are yet beyond its powers of perfect comprehension. It calls for faith in mysteries, and for a faith which shall know no doubt. And in doing so it neither acts irrationally, nor does it do violence to reason, or to the rights of the human mind. God is infinite and man is finite. Can the finite mind grasp the knowledge of the Infinite? God Himself is beyond the perfect comprehension of man, for if man could fully understand God, then would his mind be no longer finite, for it would grasp the Infinite, and we should have two infinites, which is an absurdity. When then the great First Cause reveals some of the wonders of His Godhead, we *must* be brought face to face with what to us is a mystery, something we cannot fully understand. Hence true revelation must deal with what is to us not wholly comprehensible. Yet can that mystery never contradict true Reason, for the latter is as much a manifestation of God's truth as is the former. We have referred at some length to this matter with the object of showing that it is irrational to suppose that we are to reject Christianity, because it contains mysteries, or that we are to reject

Revelation must deal with mysteries

doctrines in religion which we cannot understand, merely because we cannot understand them. To say that we refuse credence to a faith that makes such demands upon us, is irrational. It is, as we have shown, of the very nature of the case, that we must bow our reasoning powers before the revelation of the highest Reason Itself. But it is quite another matter when we ask by what right any particular form of religion makes the demand for our adherence to it. Here our reason is the judge. If Christianity declares that it, and it alone, is the Revelation of God, we have the right to demand, "Show me your credentials. How am I to know that you come from God? Where are your proofs?" And these proofs must be subjected to the most searching examination and cross-examination. Only when the evidence has made it clear that Christianity does speak with Divine Authority—then, and only then, must we accept its teaching, mystery or no mystery. We have no right then to question the possibility of the reasonableness of this or that doctrine, *when once we are reasonably convinced* that in Christianity we have God speaking to us. Such action would be to argue with God, to dispute His word; and surely this is irrational. It is here that Faith appears upon the scene. Reason has led us to the feet of Supreme Truth, and there she leaves us in the hands of Faith. Faith is to believe with-

Faith and Reason

out doubt whatever God has revealed, *because He has revealed it,* He Who is Truth Itself, and Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Mark then the position. Reason is to be the judge in the first instance, of the credentials; once these are proved to be genuine, Faith in God's word takes its place. Not that reason is dethroned—far from it—but that Reason is now safeguarded from error in its path of discovery amidst Divine things, by the Divine guidance of Faith. By what right then does Christianity claim to be the Revelation of God? It affirms that God took human form and dwelt upon earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. When we ask how this statement is to be established, we are confronted with the assertion that He proved Himself to be what He claimed to be, by rising again from the dead, of His Own unaided power, with the same body, which was laid lifeless in the grave—that He was seen, handled, and conversed with in His risen state—that His Body was endowed with new attributes, not ordinarily belonging to the human frame—that He rose to die no more, and ascended into Heaven. This is a miracle, the most stupendous the world has ever known. Are we called upon to believe this by Faith, and without a searching examination? Certainly not: for this is the great credential of which we spoke, in the acceptance of which our reason must exert its

Grounds of the claims of Christianity

The Resurrection the principal proof

Not accepted primarily by Faith, but by Reason

utmost powers. If the evidence be against the truth of this ever having happened, we must dismiss Christianity with its claims, as an impostor. If however the examination proves that this statement is true, then are we face to face with God and Jesus Christ is God. Moreover, the religion which He founded, is the only possible one, and we are bound to accept it with all its mysteries and its doctrines. We believe then in the Resurrection, because we can prove it a fact : we believe in the teachings of Him Who rose, because He is God, and *not because we can prove that they are true.* This is so important that we beg our readers to think carefully over the distinction.

Christianity therefore makes no outrageous demands upon our credence. It is rational, logical, and founded upon a certainty. Let us then investigate the evidence which is offered us in support of the statement that Jesus Christ lived, died, and arose again from the dead, and that He ascended into Heaven. Certainly if He did so rise, He was God ; for none but the Omnipotent could have wrought so great a wonder. And He did it in order that we might know when and where He had spoken.

MESSIANIC PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

POSITION OF SCRIPTURE IN THE ARGUMENT

Primary proofs not taken from New Testament,

It may be thought that our proofs are to be given from the New Testament, in the first instance, as it is the book which gives details of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, purporting to be written by eye-witnesses, or by those who were intimate with eye-witnesses of these events. Such is not our purpose. The writings of the New Testament are *not* the primary basis upon which the Christian Church is built. She existed before they came into being, and she taught, and made converts many years before a single line of their contents was ever written. She was, and is, the *living* witness to the Resurrection. Her Founder never wrote a line; never gave any instructions for a written record of His life or teaching, but commissioned her to go with His Divine authority and guidance and teach all nations. Years later, many of her ministers and others wrote accounts of the Founder of Christianity and of some of His

but from origin, existence, and history of the Christian Church

Character and claim of New Testament

utterances, and still later, this same Church of His made a selection amongst these documents, putting her seal upon a certain number of them, declaring them to be inspired and to contain no teaching contrary to the Christian Faith. Mark you, she did not declare that these same writings contain *all* that has been revealed, or that they are chronological records. As a matter of fact she has said very little about them, beyond proclaiming them as divinely inspired works. How and in what way, she has not said. When the time comes for her to do so, she will define her meaning as she has already so often done in other matters. The New Testament then, is not the witness of the Resurrection—it is the Christian Church which is the witness. The Scriptures are supplementary and corroborative only. The Church is not built upon the Scriptures, but the Scriptures upon the Church. As Professor Huxley has said, "The infallibility of the Gospels rests on that of those who selected them, as the former existed before the latter:" and again, "whoso defines the Canon, defines the Creed".[1] Hence, even if we grant at this stage, that alleged errors may have crept into the New Testament accounts, apparent errors of time, apparent errors of place, apparently contradictory statements in matters of fact, interpolations and incomplete

The Church and not the Bible the witness to the Resurrection

Scriptural difficulties do not materially affect the question

[1] Huxley's Prologue to *Science and Christian Tradition.*

fragments, these do not directly affect the question before us. We are called upon to inquire into the evidence which the Christian Church places before us, to prove the historical fact of the Resurrection. And this is not primarily the written records, Scriptural or otherwise. It is the very existence of that Church herself. No greater, no more convincing proof can be offered of the truth of Christ's rising from the dead, than the extraordinary circumstances under which Christianity came into being. This we shall investigate. Then will follow as corroborative testimony, the writings, Christian and non-Christian, which throw light upon the event, and finally we shall consider the value of the evidence given by the New Testament. In considering this last item we shall of course not look upon the various books as inspired works, but as merely human documents. And that no undue use may be made of them, we intend to accept for the purpose of argument, only those portions which the best of the so-called higher critics sanction, with such authorship and chronology as appear to them most probable.

Plan of the Book

CHAPTER II

EXPECTATION

Pagan quest of God

From earliest times, so far back as we have any record of the human race, we find men perplexed about their destiny, troubled by the existence of evil, yearning for better and higher things. Ever longing, yet ever dissatisfied, men sought in vague ideas of a great First Cause, in shadowy and anthropomorphical deities, or in the grovelling worship of dead ancestors and fictitious heroes, the satisfaction for which their hearts yearned; yet they found it not. Animate and inanimate creation became an object of adoration, but amidst this superstition was everywhere to be found, dimly yet surely, the realisation of the One Supreme God. The knowledge of the Omnipotent never died out: it was debased and dimmed, but there it was. And in every place was the expectation of better days and of a deliverance from misery. It was not merely amongst the privileged people of Israel that a deliverer was awaited—we find the same state of mind existing in Pagan nations. The

Persians were waiting for the coming of Sacchyas who was to destroy evil and make all good. Plato travelled through Greece and Egypt in search of the best religion. Cicero says, "Nature has granted us but faint sparks of knowledge, and since these are soon extinguished by our immoral habits and vices, the light of nature in its clearness and brightness is nowhere to be found".[1] And well might he say so, for the Roman world, nay, the world in general, was steeped in licentiousness and cruelty. Aristotle bears witness to the longing of noble souls for truth and purer days. Socrates says to Plato: "Thou seest that thou canst not worship God with any certainty, since thou must fear lest He may reject thee for having uttered a blasphemy. Therefore it seems best to me to wait patiently till one comes who will teach us what our bearing should be towards God and Man."[2] That a deliverer was expected is shown by the following quotations. Tacitus writes that "according to the predictions of the ancient sacred writings, the East would become powerful, and that men from Judæa would found a universal Empire".[3] Evidently the Hebrew expectation of the Messiah had travelled far, for Suetonius says: "Throughout the East there was an ancient unchanging tradition,

Pagan expectation of Revelation

And of a deliverer

[1] *Quint. Msc.*, iii. 1, 12.
[2] *Alcibiades*, ii. [3] *Annals*, v. 13.

that men out of Judæa would found a new and universal Empire".[1] Suetonius has written "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, Esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potuentur".[2] Plutarch confirms it in his work on Isis and Osiris. Cicero tells us that ancient prophesies foretold a king whom all must serve if they would be saved, and he asks who is this monarch and when he shall come.[3] There is also the well-known quotation from Virgil in his fourth Eclogue wherein he describes the new era foretold by the Sybil, in which a mysterious babe should be born—the Son of the Godhead, by whom all creatures should be renewed, sin and the serpent destroyed, and peace be given to mankind. And we need not here dwell upon the Jewish expectation of the Messiah which had reached its climax about the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. That we shall consider apart later in this work. Every Hebrew woman hoped that she might be the one chosen to be the mother of Him who was to come. The Old Testament bears witness in innumerable passages to this longing for the deliverer who was to save Israel and bring all nations to the worship of the One God. Everywhere then was there expectation of help which should relieve the sorrow

Jewish expectation of the Messiah

[1] *Vita Vesp.*, c. iv. [2] *Ibid.*, c. iv.
[3] Vide *De divina.*, ii. 54.

and suffering, the sin and ignorance of the human race. And at the time when Jesus was born, the Roman Eagle ruled the peoples of the earth; gathered into one Empire was the greater part of the then known world. Strange it is that there should be this world-wide tradition of a deliverer —strange too that he was at that time expected— stranger still that the world's history should have been so arranged at that moment, that the nations should be united under one rule, and thus the way paved for a more rapid spread of the power of such deliverer, if he were then to come.

The world prepared by Roman conquest for the spread of the teaching of the One to come

CHAPTER III

LOOKING BACK

"Thou! if Thou wast He, Who at mid-watch came,
By the starlight, naming a dubious name!
And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash
With fear—O Thou, if that martyr gash
Fell on Thee coming to take thine own,
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—
Thou art the judge. We are bruised thus
But, the judgment over, join sides with us!"

—Robert Browning, *Holy Cross Day*, stan. 16, 17.

Was the expectation fulfilled at this time?

Did the expected One come whilst the nations longed and pined for Him? *Did* He come whilst the Roman rule was universal? At all events One came then Whose Name has become the noblest, the most beautiful the world has ever known. He came in lowliness and poverty with no blare of trumpets and no kingly crown. "The Master," "The Teacher," so is He called even by those who acknowledge no divinity in His Person. Worshipped as the Saviour of the world, countless millions have done Him homage, countless millions have borne Him the burning love of their heart of hearts. Uniting in His teaching all that was

Advent of Jesus

noblest and purest and most elevating, He has conquered the world and established a universal Empire such as man has never known before. Kingdoms and States and Republics pass away, and the long centuries roll on, but His rule remains and grows and makes each day fresh conquests. And His name is Jesus. This name has transformed the world. It has chased away the dark night of general lust and cruelty. It has freed the slave, fed the hungry, visited the fatherless, and united in one common bond of brotherhood king and peasant, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. Look at the world as it was when He came, and look at it to-day. This mighty change has been worked by the lowly Jesus, Who was born in poverty and died a cruel and shameful death. It was worked by Him of Whom His astonished hearers said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and those mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas. And his sisters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"[1] "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"[2] How comes it that this humble Peasant, Who knew nothing of worldly culture, should unite in His

What he has done for man

Earthly learning and position cannot account for it

[1] Matt. xiii. 54, 55, 56. [2] John vii. 15.

Person all and far more than all the noblest teaching of an Aristotle and a Plato—all and far more than all the sublimest sayings of the greatest philosophers and teachers the world has ever known? Here in His teaching we find united everything that is admirable in Brahminism, in Buddhism, and in Confucianism. Here united is all that is best and purest in every known form of religion. And yet He was a lowly Peasant, a carpenter's son. Whence then this learning? Whence then this power? Surely this is a marvel to arrest our attention! Can it be after all that this long expected deliverer was to be no mere temporal king, no mere conqueror like Mahommed who should rule with an earthly rule? Can it be that He was to be the Spiritual Saviour, Who should reign in love, Who should change men's hearts, Who should soothe the sorrowing, enlighten the ignorant and bring peace, comfort and salvation to the weary hearts and minds of the human race? Are all these traditions and prophecies, all these expectations realised in Him? It is surely more than strange that Jesus should come just at that moment of general longing, of general desire, of general preparedness; just when He was needed most; just when all was prepared by Roman power to make the spread of His teaching more easy. If Jesus Christ be the fulfilment of the

How then explain His power?

The Messiah a spiritual and not a temporal ruler

Coincidence of life of Jesus at this time

world's expectations, *if* He be the accomplishment of prophecy and tradition, *if* He be the Deliverer sent by a merciful God looking with pity on human misery, what a fulfilment of men's hopes and expectations! If God *has* interfered in the behalf of His creatures by taking the form of man, by dying upon the Cross to prove His love and by rising again to give man hope, then can we no longer speak of the "grim silence of God". Then have we a certain hope and a blessed surety of the hereafter. Then can we know that one day inequalities shall be redressed, and that the sufferings of this life are as nothing compared with the glories that shall be revealed. Then can we believe that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. There is ground for Faith and a rock for Hope. "If!" How much depends upon that word! *If* only God has so revealed Himself, if the blood-stained, gentle, suffering Jesus is really God! What a God! Sublime beyond the wildest thoughts of man! No apocryphal Sun-God can compare with Him! No virgin-born deity of paganism can bear the light of His loving eyes. Pitiful and sorrowful, merciful to the sinful, gentle to His persecutors, how He appeals to our hearts as none other has ever done! His words are full of tenderness and His acts of gentleness. Even the Agnostics stand in reverent admiration. Strauss

How He fulfils expectations

Rationalist testimony to Jesus

writes of Him: "He is the highest object we can
Strauss possibly imagine with respect to religion, the Being without whose presence in the mind, perfect piety is impossible".[1] "The Christ of the Gospels," says
Renan Renan, "is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal. His reign will never end."[2]

J. S. Mill John Stuart Mill spoke of Him as "a man charged with a special, express, and unique communication from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue".[3] He further says of Him that He is "the ideal representative and guide of humanity". And
Rousseau Rousseau says: "consider the gentleness of Jesus, the purity of his morals, the persuasiveness of his teaching. How lofty his principles! What wisdom in his words! How opportune, frank and direct his answers!":[4] and again: "If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God".[5] *If* only *Jesus* be the long desired, what a realisation of the hopes and desires of the human race! Is it true? Is this humble man of Galilee the Divine Teacher sent from God? Is He God Himself? He is, if it be true that after death He raised Himself to life to die no more and ascended into Heaven.

[1] *Vergängl. u. Bleibendes in Christenthum.*
[2] *Études d'Hist. Relig.*, 213, 214.
[3] *Three Essays*, p. 254. [4] *Emile*, iv. [5] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

IS JESUS CHRIST AN HISTORICAL PERSON?

Few deny this

THERE is hardly a man who has lived in the long byegone past as to whose existence some clever critic could not raise objections,—and plausible objections. Jesus Christ has not escaped the notice of such critics. They are indeed few, and to-day amongst the ablest of English objectors stands Mr. J. M. Robertson, whose scholarly work entitled *A Short History of Christianity* is so well known. We shall have reason a little later to refer to his argument. Certainly if Jesus Christ never existed, then Buddha and Aristotle and Julius Cæsar are the wildest of myths. No more perfect proof of the existence of any well-known historical personage can be offered than that which establishes Jesus as a real character in history. Not merely the very birth of Christianity and Christian tradition itself, but the testimony of Pagan and Jewish writers alike establish His existence. The early opponents of the new religion, and the early heretics also both acknowledge it, and there is an almost unanimous consent to it on the part of agnostics and higher

Mr. J. M. Robertson

No character more historical than that of Jesus

Jewish and Pagan corroboration

critics at the present day. Strauss, Schleiermacher, Paulus, Renan, Schmiedel, Keim, and Weitzsäcker do not dispute it. Tacitus the pagan writer tells us in his *Annals* (xv. 44): "Christ, the originator of that name (Christian) had been executed by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius."

Tacitus

The Jewish Talmud[1] informs us when he was crucified, and Jewish Tradition has ever testified to the reality of His existence. Surely none would have been more interested to declare the personality of Christ a myth, than the Jews who abhor His memory as a blot upon their race because of His claim to the Godhead. Quadratus, a disciple of the Apostles, and probably Bishop of Athens, addressed, A.D. 126, an apology in favour of the Christians to the Emperor Adrian. The Apology has perished, but Eusebius gives us the following quotations from it. "Our Saviour's works were enduring, for they were real. I appeal herewith to those who were healed by Him, to those He raised from the dead. They were seen not only at the moment, when restored to health or recalled to life, but long after. They were still living during the life of our Lord and after His ascension: some even survived to our own time."[2] Polycarp and Irenæus, Ignatius and Papias, Aristides and Melito, and numerous others bear incontrovertible wit-

The Talmud

Early Christian testimony

[1] Art. "Sanhedrin". [2] *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 3.

ness to the life of Christ, and we shall quote their words when we come to speak of the crucifixion. Mr. Gould in his *Concise History of Religion* (vol. iii., "Christian Origins," p. 109,) says: "The history of religion presents no more difficult problem than the collection from doubtful materials of the probabilities, as to the date, character and career of Jesus, so difficult indeed, that, in support of the thesis that no such person, human or non-human, existed at the time usually assigned to him in the first century, extreme critics can advance arguments which tax our ingenuity to answer. On the other hand the great religious movement at the opening of the Christian era, requires a starting-point, a stimulus, a preacher, a leader. Paul and the Christian Church, and the New Testament writings direct us, confusedly enough, but still with a certain emphasis and conviction, back to a strong personality. The reader will perhaps allow, that in the view of the character and teaching of Jesus just given, there are no improbable elements, for it is a very common thing in history to meet with earnest religious reformers who win loyalty, devotion, and an admiration which almost rises to worship. And this is all that is claimed for Jesus. The intellectual conditions of the age rendered the growth of legend both inevitable and luxuriant, and the process would be so much the more easy if, as seems reason-

Mr. Gould

able to conclude, Jesus was known to only a small circle, and His missionary labour was cut short."

Baur's objection

Baur says that the mythical Christ was invented by the Christian community late in the second century. But the very evidence we have given from Pagan and Christian writers disproves this statement, and we have the testimony of the synoptic Gospels viewed as ordinary history to the existence of Jesus as a real and not a mythical character. Paul's early writings moreover carry us still further back in establishing the existence of Jesus as an historical personage. If not Jesus, who was it that established Christianity which came into being only on the strength of His existence? As Rousseau has said, the Acts of Socrates are not so well attested as those of Christ, and it is more inconceivable that several men should combine to fabricate the tone and moral teaching of the Gospels than that there should have been a living original whom they described. Its inventors would be more marvellous than its alleged hero.[1]

Strauss' objection

Strauss says that the pantheistic conception of the essential unity of the Godhead and manhood, combined with the expectation of the Messiah gave rise to the "group of legends" which transferred to one in the person of Christ what belonged to mankind as a whole. But apart from the evidence we have

[1] *Emile*, iv. Vide, also, Rousseau quoted under "Resurrection," *infra*.

been giving as to the personality of Christ, we may ask the writer why this idea took form in Christianity alone, when there were so many other forms of religious thought existing at that time. Mr. J. M. Robertson would seem to have us believe that Christianity itself is merely a modified form of the worship of the Sun God Mithra. He writes: "As we have seen, the Osirian cult and that of Serapis, grafted on it in the time of the Ptolemies, made popular the symbol of the Cross long before Christianity, and prepared for the latter religion in many ways. Perhaps its closest counterpart, however, was its most tenacious rival, the worship of the Sun-God, Mithra, first introduced into Rome in the time of Pompey, whose troops received it from the Cilician pirates, the *débris* of the army of Mithridates, whom he conquered and enlisted in the Roman service. Mithra, being the most august of all the gods of war, his worship became the special religion of the Roman army. Apart from its promise of immortality, its fascination lay in its elaborate initiations, baptisms, probations, sacraments and mysteries which were kept at a higher level of moral stringency than those of almost any of the competing sects. The god was epicene, or bisexual, having a male and a female aspect, and there seems to have been no amorous element in his myth at the Christian period. Unless it be decided that such

Mr. J. M. Robertson's objection

rituals had prevailed all over the East, the Christian eucharist must be held to have been a direct imitation of that of Mithraism, which it so closely resembled that the early Fathers declared the priority of the rival sacrament to be due to diabolic agency. The Mithraist ritual, indeed, appears to have been the actual source of part of the Christian mystery-play, inasmuch as Mithra, whose special epithet was 'The Rock' was liturgically represented as dead, buried in a rock tomb, mourned over, and raised again amid rejoicing. For the Mithraists also the sign of the Cross, made on the forehead, was the supreme symbol; and it was mainly their cult which established the usage of calling the Sun-day, the first of the week, 'the day of the Lord,' Mithra as the sun being the first of the seven planetary spirits on whose names the week was based. In the third century, the chief place of the cult in the empire was on the Vatican Mount at Rome; and there it was that Christian legend located the martyrdom of Peter, who, as we have seen, was assimilated to Mithra both in name and attributes."[1] "Near the close of his treatise Justin describes the Christian customs of Baptism, Eucharist and Sunday worship and roundly declares that the wicked devils had induced

[1] *A Short History of Christianity*, Watts & Co., 1902, pp. 70, 71.

the followers of Mithra to imitate these Christian rites."[1] "Even where the dependence of Christian ideas and practices on Pagan is particularly evident —I mean in the case of the Sacraments—we must not be content with merely pointing out this dependence: for the Christian doctrine of the Sacraments has characteristic features of its own; as is proved, for example, by Justin Martyr's account of baptism."[2] The resemblance in certain details is striking, but proves nothing.

Mithraism in its relation to Christianity

In all the various forms of Pagan worship we find approximations to Christian worship and teaching, for in all of them is a substratum of truth. We know, however, that Jesus Christ was as distinct from Mithra as he was from Napoleon. We know and have shown that the Founder of Christianity was no myth, and we shall show that He died upon the Cross, whence and whence alone originates the Christian use of that symbol. The form of cross employed alike in Mithraism and in other religious bodies was quite different from that used by Christians. The latter was a copy of the instrument of servile punishment in use, the Latin cross, while the former was the Hebrew Tau or else an emblematic cross with equal arms. Even

Mithraic and Christian Cross

[1] Gould, vol. iii., p. 232.

[2] "The Relation between Ecclesiastical and General History," by Prof. Adolf Harnack, *Contemp. Review*, Dec., 1904.

had we not historical evidence to establish these facts, it is quite incredible that Jews who were the strictest of monotheists should have suddenly adopted Mithra as their God, and declared him to be a really existing character—and Jews, moreover, who were devoted to their religion, at a time too when the worship of Jehovah had never been so pure amongst them. There is nothing to explain such an extraordinary change, and all the evidence of history is against it. The Pagans who were converted to Christianity gave up their Mithra worship and anathematised it. Surely this is inconsistent with the theory that the two religions were practically identical. Moreover, the change was radical and vital, for a belief in Jesus involved not merely an abjuring of Mithra, but a much severer code of morals and self-denial, and led its votaries to social ostracism and death. It is therefore inconceivable that there is anything but a mere coincidence in the employment by both religions of certain common symbols and formulæ. "As to the theory of the mythical apotheosis of the life of Christ," says Schelling, "every one will admit that no life has ever been transfigured by myths or legends, unless owing to previous great actions or other causes it had already been idealised. The question then is, How came the Jewish Rabbis' Jesus to be the object of

Jews strict monotheists hostile to idolatry yet worshippers of Jesus

Pagan sacrifices for Jesus

Schelling and mystical apotheosis of Christ's life

such apotheosis? Was it on account of his teaching? But the stones which they cast at him show their appreciation of his doctrines! Upon what supposition can we credit so marvellous a glorification? Since the immense majority of his nation certainly did not believe him to be the Messiah, it is only by admitting the truth of what Pagan and Old Testament writers, independently of the Gospels, affirm of the person of Christ, that we can explain the origin of the dogmatic myth. But such an admission presupposes the greatness of Christ independently of the Gospels. . . . We do not need the Gospels to attest his greatness, on the contrary we must admit his greatness, if we would understand the Gospel narrative."[1]

Were it necessary to further discuss the historicity of Jesus, many other arguments might be adduced. As has been well said: "If I were to develop the argument, I should of course call attention to the self-consistency of the character, and the impossibility of inventing it. In the next place I should point to the originality of the teaching of Jesus as a whole. We may be ransacking the world's religious literature, accumulate parallels to this saying or that, but we cannot match the unique combination into a consistent and coherent whole found in the Gospels. These are points

[1] *Philos. der Offenbarung*, v., ii., p. 233.

which I leave with you and do not develop. There is another point on which I wish to say rather more. In our traditions of Jesus, there are sayings of His which could not possibly have been invented by His followers; and for this reason that they were sayings which there was no temptation to invent, and which, once they had been spoken, there was considerable temptation for the Gospel narrator to suppress. When, for example, Jesus is represented as confessing that He is ignorant of the day of His own second coming, or when again, He asks the Scribe, 'Why callest thou Me good?' or when He utters the cry of desertion on the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' who does not see that in utterances of that kind, we have a certain proof of the authenticity of the saying and of the historicity of the speaker? Because those who came to write afterwards, and who wished to set Jesus before their readers in His glory, were surely tempted to suppress, if, as we are assured by our opponents, they were open to influences of that kind at all, such sayings as represented Jesus expressing His own ignorance or regarding Himself as deserted by God upon the Cross. Sayings of that kind could never have been invented, and the later you make the Gospels the more difficult invention becomes, since more and more then was the tendency as men moved further

away from the historical Jesus to express doctrines of Him which overlooked and tried to whittle away the force of sayings of that description."[1] In bringing to a close this short dissertation on the existence of Jesus, we cannot pass over the oft-repeated story, that the Founder of Christianity is one with Jesus the son of Panther or Pandira a Roman soldier, and Miriam or Mary, a Hebrew girl. This story taken from the Talmud has reference to a man named Jesus who lived a hundred years before the birth of the Christian Jesus. Haeckel in his *Riddle of the Universe* repeated the calumny at second-hand and had to retract it. Yet it appears and re-appears as something new, and it is well once for all to state that it has nothing whatever to do with Jesus of Nazareth to whom it can in no possible way refer. Mr. McCabe in his defence of Haeckel has acknowledged the true source of this shameful story. We may then declare with certainty that Jesus Christ was no myth but a real historical personage. As John Stuart Mill has well said: "Who among his disciples, or among the proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels?"[2]

Pandira story

Conclusion Jesus is an historical character

Testimony of John Stuart Mill

[1] Prof. Peake, M.A. (late Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, Tutor at Primitive Methodist and Lancashire Independent College), *Did Jesus rise again?*

[2] *Essay on Theism*, p. 253.

CHAPTER V

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Death of Jesus must be proved; necessity of it

Swoon theory

CLEARLY if Jesus Christ did not die He could not rise again. Hence we have to show that He did really die, for there are critics who allege that the Resurrection can be readily explained on the hypothesis that Christ merely swooned and was removed in that state to the tomb, where He revived and subsequently appeared to His followers, thus giving rise to the belief in His Resurrection. We intend first of all to adduce Pagan testimony to the fact of the death of Christ, then Jewish and finally Christian evidence. And it may be as well to say here a few words concerning the paucity of documents relating to Christianity in general which have come down to us from the first two centuries of the Christian era. We must remember that printing was then unknown, and that the parchments and scrolls on which men wrote were peculiarly liable to destruction. These records were of great value and not printed in numerous copies and many editions, as they are to-day. And from time to time these valuable memorials of the past

Causes of paucity of early documents

fell into the hands of hordes of ignorant soldiers in time of war, by whom they were destroyed. We know that the great Alexandrian Library, where it is said that there were some seven hundred thousand manuscripts, was partly burnt during the siege by Cæsar, and finally destroyed with all its historical treasures in the year A.D. 391. As to Jerusalem itself, the Temple and all the ancient quarters of the city with all their manuscripts were destroyed by fire in the siege by Titus A.D. 70. We can then hardly be surprised that so little has come down to us from those early days. And yet, more than enough has reached us to prove that Jesus Christ not only lived, but that He died upon the cross in the reign of Tiberius, and under the Judæan procurator, Pontius Pilate. We have already adduced Tacitus as a witness to the existence of Christ. He is more. He gives testimony to the fact of the crucifixion, for he says that Christ "had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius".[1] Tacitus was writing of the persecution under Nero, which took place thirty years after the death of Christ, and he wrote this passage seventy years after the latter event, thus referring to it as a well-known fact of history. Lucian says (120 to 200 A.D.): "Moreover their first Lawgiver has taught them

Tacitus a witness to death of Christ

[1] *Annals*, XV. 44.

(*the Christians*) that they are all brethren, when once they have turned and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worship this master of theirs WHO WAS CRUCIFIED, and engage to live according to his laws".[1] There are numerous references to the sufferings of the early Christians in the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, the younger Pliny, Martial, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, as also in the rescript of Adrian to Minutius Fundanus, the proto-consul of Asia, but the foregoing refer directly to the death of Christ. Although no longer extant, the *Acta Pontii Pilati*, much disputed though they be, may be mentioned as evidence, since the existence of this document is rendered morally certain by the testimony of Eusebius, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr.[2] It was the custom for Roman governors to keep an account of the important events which occurred in their provinces, and to send them from time to time to Rome, where these records were carefully preserved. "Παλαιοῦ κεκρατηκότος ἔθους τοῖς τῶν ἐθνων αρχουσι τὰ παρά σφισι καινοτομούμενα τῷ τὴν βασίλειον ἀρχὴν ἐπιχρατοῦντι σημαίνειν, ὡς ἄν μηδὲν αὐτὸν διαδιδράσκοι τῶν γινομένων — The ancient custom prevailing among the rulers of

Acta Pontii Pilati

[1] *De morte Peregrini*, t. i., p. 565, ed. Græv.

[2] Vide *Pearson on the Creed*, Art. "He rose again from the dead".

the Gentiles of indicating new events (revolutionary) among them to that one of the kings (the ruling king) so that nothing of the events escapes him."[1] Pontius Pilate as governor of Judæa was no exception to the rule, and Tertullian (A.D. 150 to 230), after narrating the particulars of the crucifixion, says, "Ea omnia super Christo, Pilatus, et ipse jam pro sua conscientia Christianus, Cæsari, tunc Tiberio, nuntiavit—All these facts concerning Christ, Pilate . . . reported to the reigning Emperor Tiberius."[2] And again he says, "Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in sæculum introivit, annuntiata sibi ex Syria Palestina, quæ veritatem illius (*Christi*) divinitates revelarunt, detulit ad senatum, cum prærogativa suffragii sui".[3] Eusebius (A.D. 265-340) relates this from Tertullian in his *Ecclesiastical History*.[4] In his *Chronicon* Eusebius tells us on the authority of the same Tertullian, that "Pilato de Christianorum dogmate ad Tiberium referente, Tiberius retulit ad senatum, ut inter cætera sacra reciperetur". Than these records made by Pontius Pilate himself, no more valuable evidence can be adduced. It would be a very dangerous argument to say that as they do not now exist, they probably never did so. This line of argument was used by the

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, bk. ii., cap. ii.
[2] *Apology*, cap. xxi. [3] *Ib.*, cap. v. [4] Bk. ii., cap. ii.

author of *Supernatural Religion* in regard to Tatian's *Diatessaron*, but that long-lost work was found a few years later. We have testimony to the existence of Pilate's records from Tertullian and Eusebius; and the evidence of Justin Martyr[1] shall next be adduced. Speaking of the crucifixion he says in his *Apology* (i. 35): "And that these things occurred you may learn from the Acts drawn up under Pontius Pilate"; and he again refers to them in his *Apology* (xxi.). And let it be remembered that he is writing to the Roman Emperor, and referring him to them. If they were non-existent, can any course be more absurd? He would be defeating the very end he had in view—that of vindicating Christianity. Moreover, in the disputes between Christians these Acts were quoted by both parties. We need hardly say that the genuine Acts have had many counterfeits.

Cf. Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc. N.T.*, vol. i., p. 298 ff.
Thilo, „ „ „ „ p. 796 ff.
Tischendorf, *Evang. Apoc.*, p. 411.

Legends about Pontius Pilate

It may be interesting to some of our readers to mention that Pontius Pilate was summoned to Rome three years after the death of Christ, on a charge of cruelty, and was condemned and sent into exile. There are many legends concerning him; some affirm that he became a Christian, and

[1] Beheaded A.D. 165.

he is regarded as a saint by the Abyssinian Church; others state that he committed suicide. The legend connected with Mount Pilatus at Lucerne is well known. At Vienna a pyramid on the banks of the Rhone is shown as his tomb. The famous quotation from Publius Lentulus, who is alleged to have lived in the time of Christ, would be valuable as evidence were it genuine, which it is not. We give it as a sample of a curious literary fraud. Its author is said to have lived in the twelfth century, although Farrar in his *Life of Lives* (page 162) tells us that this description of Christ was known to John of Damascus in the eighth century. "There has appeared in this our day a man of great virtue, named Jesus Christ, who is yet living amongst us, and with the Gentiles is accepted as a prophet of truth; but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of diseases; a man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as a beholder may both love and fear; his hair is of the colour of a filbert full ripe, and plain down to his ears, but from his ears downwards somewhat curled and more orient of colour, waving about his shoulders. In the midst of his head goeth a seam or partition of hair, after the manner of Nazarites; his forehead very smooth and plain; his face, nose and mouth so framed as nothing can be repre-

The spurious testimony of Publius Lentulus

hended; his beard somewhat thick, agreeable to the hair of his head for colour, not of any great length, but forked in the middle; of an innocent and mature look; his eyes grey, clear and quick. In reproving he is terrible; in admonishing courteous and fair-spoken, pleasant in speech, amidst gravity. It cannot be remembered that any have seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. In proportion of body, well-shaped and straight; his hands and arms most beauteous to behold; in speaking, very temperate, modest and wise; a man of singular virtue, surpassing the children of men." And now we pass on to Jewish testimony to the death of Christ upon the Cross. And this is of great value, for it is the witness given by the earliest and most determined of all the enemies of Christianity. The Jews regard Jesus Christ as a blasphemer and the founder of a strange religion and consider Him as a blot upon their race on that account. None would have been more ready to disown all acquaintance with Him than they. And yet the crucifixion has been handed down as a constant Jewish tradition. In the Talmud, the book most prized by the Jews after the Old Testament, we read in one of its treatises entitled "The Sanhedrin": "Christ was put to death on the eve of Easter, because He had practised enchantments, and perverted the people of Israel,

Witness of the Talmud

and led them to embrace a strange religion. As no defence could be found for this, He was crucified on the eve of Pasch" (page 107). The only account by a contemporaneous historian of Jesus is by Josephus, in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (book xviii., chap. iii., para. 3,). He also bears testimony to the same fact, even if it be allowed that much of the passage is spurious. It is quoted in its completeness by Eusebius (*H.E.*, i. 11), by Sozomen (*H.E.*, i. 1), by Isidore of Pelusium (*Epist.* iv., 225), and by Rufinius (*H.E.*, iii. 1), and it seems more than strange that every known copy contains it. Had the work been exclusively in Christian hands there might have been something to say in favour of pious interpolation, but such is not the case. In his *Antiquities of the Jews* (book xviii., chap. iii., para. 3), occurs the following statement:[1] "At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man, for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ; and when Pilate at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the Cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him, did not cease to adhere to him; for on the third day he appeared to them alive again, the Divine Pro-

And of Josephus

[1] Josephus, *Hist.* (*Antiquities*).

phets having foretold these and many wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists to this time." Whether this quotation in its entirety be genuine or not we have without it enough Jewish testimony to the point under our consideration. And now we pass on to the Christian testimony to the same fact, as evidenced by writers of the first two centuries of our era. But before doing so, we would call attention to what in our opinion is a stronger proof even than these references—the existence and tradition of the Christian Church itself. For twenty centuries all the world over has the crucifixion been the object of reverence by Christians of all denominations. As Paul says, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). The Cross has been the symbol of the Faith, used by the followers of the Crucified as a sign of their profession. The preaching of the crucifixion looms as large in the dawn of Christianity as it does to-day, and there is the unbroken witness of all centuries to the death of Jesus Christ upon Calvary under the procurator Pontius Pilate. We have the Apostles' Creed which in its simplest form was, if not of immediate apostolic origin, at least of origin from those who personally knew the Apostles. And what could

Tradition of the Christian Church

The Sign of the Cross

Apostles' Creed

have induced the earliest Christians to adopt as their glory so degrading a symbol as the Latin instrument of a slave's death, unless it had been sanctified to them by Him who died upon it? Here is a definite origin for it, and there is no other probable. That it was no adaptation of Mithraism we have already shown, for their form of cross was different, and moreover the Christians held all pagan worship in abhorrence. This very state of mind would have prevented them from choosing as characteristic of them what was already in some sense a badge of heathendom, unless they had been impelled thereto by the history of their Founder's death. Everywhere the sign of the Cross was made as a profession of their faith in the crucified. In public worship, in private devotion, in the Catacombs, in the churches, we find the same testimony. Why should Christians who had before them so many other means of testifying their love for Jesus, so many other emblems that they might have chosen, have selected this particular sign and thus, as it were, have made their Master a stumblingblock and a ridicule to the pagan world? For be it remembered, here was no pretty myth of an Apocryphal sun-god, but the assertion that their Founder was condemned to the death of a slave. Only reality could have induced such a statement and the adoption of such a sign.

Why choose so degrading a symbol?

And now let us see some small portion of the evidence which even the first two centuries can give as to the death of Jesus Christ. Clement writes of the "Passiones Domini ante oculos nostros".[1] Polycarp (156-166 A.D.) was a disciple of St. John the Divine and was appointed by the Apostles Bishop of Smyrna. In his letter *ad Phil.*, c. ix., he says, speaking of the Christian martyrdom, "For they loved not the present world but *Him who died* and was raised again by God for us". Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp. He says in his book, *Adv. Hæres.*, L. c. iii.: "For after that our Lord was raised from the dead," etc. And Irenæus, a native of Asia Minor and Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, who was born A.D. 140 and died A.D. 202, refers to the death of Christ in his book *Adv. Hæres.* Aristides (A.D. 138-161), a philosopher of Athens, wrote an apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in which he says: "He was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried". Justin Martyr who was born at Shechene (Neapolis) in Samaria, and was beheaded in A.D. 165, writing to Trypho the Jew says: "For after that you had crucified Him," etc.[2] Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who suffered martyrdom in Rome A.D. 160, gives testimony to the same as does also Ignatius who suffered martyrdom in A.D. 115, either

Clement

Polycarp

Irenæus

Aristides

Justin Martyr

Papias

[1] *Ep.* i., *ad Cor.* [2] *Dialogue*, xviii.

at Antioch or at Rome. In his epistle to the Trallians, which is allowed to be authentic, he says that Jesus was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, truly crucified and died. Melito (A.D. 170) says, "Deus passus est a manu Israelitico."[1] These were men living but a very short time after the event; some of them in the companionship of eye-witnesses of it and all easily able to verify what they said. Aristides would hardly have dared to refer to the death of Jesus in his letter to the Roman Emperor, if that event had never taken place. It is useless to multiply further references. Those given are more than sufficient to prove the Christian witness to the crucifixion of Christ. And all these are also witnesses to the existence of Jesus as an historical character. Let us now pass on to the evidence given in the writings of the New Testament. Before doing so, however, we wish once more to call attention to the fact that we are dealing with these works as merely historical documents, and in no sense does the question of inspiration enter into the matter. Neither does authorship form a necessary feature for us in this present inquiry. We intend only to make use of what is unquestionably allowed by the best of modern critics. It might be claimed for the Gospel according to Matthew that it was certainly written by him whose

Melito

The New Testament writings

How considered in this argument

[1] *Apud Gallandum*, 179.

name it bears, and hence by an eyewitness to the event he records, and the same for John's Gospel, but we do not wish here to press this point. At least the former of these Gospels was written during the lifetime of the Apostle, and the events therein narrated were matter of public knowledge at the time. And in the case of the fourth Gospel it is allowed that, if John himself did not write it, it was composed either at his dictation, or by one of his immediate and personal disciples. The Gospels of Mark and Luke are written by companions of Peter and Paul respectively, and hence have almost the value of first-hand evidence, for Peter was a witness of the sufferings of his Master, and Paul had every opportunity of personal knowledge, being before his conversion an intimate friend and partisan of the Jewish Sanhedrin. We shall have more to say upon this matter when we come to speak of the Resurrection itself. Each of the four gives in detail the story of the Cross, and Paul, writing to the Corinthians only twenty-six years after the event speaks of the crucifixion as a well-known fact, and this Epistle is allowed to be genuine by all the best of the higher critics. Here then we have historical testimony to the death of Christ upon the cross carried back to within a very few years of the event. And now we may pass on to consider some of the difficulties which are alleged

What they testify

against these accounts. And first of all just a word on the date of the crucifixion, which is variously given from A.D. 29 to A.D. 35, the commonly accepted year being A.D. 30. It is argued rather absurdly that the very inability to give a precise year for this event tells against the reality of it, and shows that men could not have appreciated that God was dwelling in their midst and had worked for them so great a gift as the Redemption. They would have better marked and kept the date in such a case. Now in the first place the chronology of that period is altogether in an unsettled state, due partly to miscalculation and partly to loss of records, for the same difficulty applies to very many of the early events and characters of early history. Sometimes we find discrepancies of twenty or thirty years owing to these circumstances. And in this particular case the followers of Christ were more occupied in preparing for the second coming of their Lord than in writing records and keeping dates, for they had misunderstood one of His sayings to imply that the end of all things was near. There is therefore nothing very remarkable in our inability to fix the date precisely. Time may bring hidden documents to light which will settle this very important question.

Date of crucifixion

An objection based on its indefiniteness

Early dates indefinite and why

And now we come to the celebrated "swoon theory," whereby Schleiermacher and Paulus tried to

The swoon theory of Schleiermacher and Paulus

explain away the Resurrection. They declare that Jesus swooned upon the cross, and in this condition was removed to the tomb, where He revived, and that afterwards He made his escape and re-appeared to His disciples. In so far as this theory relates to the Resurrection we shall deal with it hereafter, but as to its declaration that Jesus swooned, and did not die we shall discuss it now. Let us consider the circumstances under which Christ came to hang upon the cross. He was unwillingly condemned by Pilate through fear of his position being compromised, and in order to give pleasure to the Jews whom he feared in their influence with Tiberius. The hatred of Jesus by the Jews was so intense that it is quite inconceivable they would leave Calvary until they were perfectly sure of the accomplishment of their aim, in the death of their victim. For this end they had left no stone unturned, and even before the sufferer reached the place of Golgotha. He had been mercilessly scourged even to blood, buffeted and hurried from tribunal to tribunal. The mental sufferings and anguish of so refined a mind, so gentle and frail a form, must have been intense, deserted as He was by friends and surrounded by a howling mob of miscreants thirsting for His blood. That He must have been very weak and almost at the last gasp is shown by the soldiers compelling Simon of Cyrene to bear His cross. It

Refuted by the history of the crucifixion

Jewish hatred of Christ

Christ's weakness shown by the bearing of the cross by Simon

was not customary, for each sufferer had to bear his own. It was then out of no compassion that a by-stander was compelled to carry it for him. His enemies feared to lose the sight of His sufferings on Calvary; and so to save their victim from an untimely death upon the way, His cross was placed on other shoulders. Were these the men to quit the scene of the crucifixion until they knew their victim's fate was sealed? It is incredible. But Pilate marvelled that He was already dead! True, and that very astonishment,—due no doubt to his inability to understand all that Jesus had suffered —became the means of giving us another proof that Christ was really dead. He sent for the Roman centurion to convince himself that there was no mistake, and from his lips the judge received the official assurance of the condemned One's death. And now let us examine a difficulty which is urged against the Gospels by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. It refers to the breaking of the legs of the thieves who were crucified with Jesus, and the piercing of the Saviour's side. We are told by him and others that the spuriousness of John's story is proved by the omission on the part of the soldiers to break the legs of Jesus, and that the piercing of the side is only a story invented to fulfil an alleged prophecy, and that in any case the piercing of the side would show

Jews would never depart till sure of His death

Pilate's astonishment at early death

The breaking of the legs and piercing of side

that the soldiers were by no means sure that Christ was dead. Moreover, if the tale be true, Roman soldiers dared to disobey Pilate's order when they did not break the legs of Jesus. And John who narrates these things relates the request of Joseph of Arimathea for the body, *after* Pilate had given the order for the breaking of the legs. "How then comes it," ask these critics, "that, according to Mark, Pilate expressed astonishment at the death of Christ, seeing that he had given the orders for the crurifragium to be carried out?"

Harmony of accounts of John and Mark

We would suggest that there is no real difficulty in all these objections. Let us put the details in the two Gospels into their natural order. Joseph was standing near the cross and saw Jesus die. The two thieves were still alive, and the Jews were anxious for the removal of all the bodies before the Sabbath day. They therefore resolved to ask Pilate to allow the legs of the two thieves to be broken to expedite their death. Now to understand the meaning of this request we must enter into some little explanation of the ordinary course of a case of crucifixion. This form of death was a slow torture, and criminals often remained in their sufferings for two or three days, during which time a guard of soldiers remained to see that no help was given to the sufferer. When, however, for any reason it was deemed necessary to hasten death, it

was the custom to make up as it were for the long torture of two or three days by substituting some shorter but more severe punishment, and that usually took the form of breaking the legs of the criminal with mallets, from the hips downwards. The agony was terrible, but it did not generally cause death. It was not intended to do so. After this cruel torture, the *coup de grace* was given by the lance or sword, and thus the poor sufferer's agony was ended. Now, as we have said, Jesus was already dead, and the Jews wanted all three bodies removed; hence they resolved to ask Pilate for the crurifragium in the case of the two thieves. Jesus being already dead, and the breaking of the legs being intended to cause suffering, it would have been absurd to ask for it in His case. Joseph, learning that some of the by-standers had gone to Pilate for this permission, himself also went, and when they had obtained their request from Pilate, he entered the governor's presence, told him that Jesus was dead and asked for the body. Pilate was astonished that death had occurred so soon and even before the crurifragium, and sent for the centurion in charge of the soldiers whom he commissioned to carry out this punishment. From him he learnt that what Joseph had said was true, and so he sent back the Centurion to break the legs of the two thieves and at the same time gave

The crurifragium

The coup de grace

Joseph permission to take away the dead body of Jesus. Now this explains what the critics consider such a powerful objection against the narration in John's Gospel, that the soldiers came to the first robber and broke his legs and then passed over Jesus who would have been the next in order and went on to the second robber. Jesus was already dead and it would have been absurd to break His legs, seeing that the only object of that was the infliction of torture. Moreover, there is another consideration which is fatal to the objection. The three crosses were not arranged in a straight line, but in the form of a triangle, at the apex of which stood that of Jesus. Thus in any case the legs of the two robbers would have been broken first, before the soldiers had passed on to Jesus. Then comes the difficulty of the piercing of the side of Jesus. Does this not show that there was doubt as to His death? Not at all. There was a howling mob of infuriated Jews standing around. They would have liked to see Jesus submitted to the crurifragium. They were disappointed—they saw the *coup de grace* given probably by a lance thrust into the two robbers—they wished to wreak their last vengeance upon the lifeless form of their victim, or indeed some of them may have doubted whether He was quite dead, and so an uproar was raised, and the soldiers were upbraided, and to satisfy the

Position of the crosses

Piercing of the side

mob one of them thrust his lance into the heart of Christ to prove that death had really taken place. "But the wound was only skin deep," says one critic, "and Jesus might have been in a swoon after all. Joseph and Nicodemus being rich men had bribed, perhaps Pilate, and most probably the centurion, and so the soldier merely grazed the side of Christ." There is no end to the ingenious contentions of some minds, and to their fertility in manufacturing objections. The flowing of "blood and water" would however leave no room for their theory. Physiology and anatomy were unknown sciences in those days, and the circulation of blood had not then been discovered. If Christ were alive and the lance thrust had been merely superficial, blood alone would have flowed, or possibly if the swoon were deep, no blood at all. If however the thrust were deep, through pleura and pericardium, blood and blood-stained serum would gush out, and this may have been described as the flowing of blood and water. And thus John in his ignorance of physiology and pathology has given us one of the best proofs possible that Christ was really dead, for he could not have known this pathology of the fact he recorded. And once again we must insist upon it that the Jews who had come there for the express purpose of crucifying Jesus would be certain to assure themselves of His death

Objection: Only skin-deep

when the body was taken down from the cross and given to Joseph of Arimathea. There can then be no possible doubt as to the fact that it was the dead and not the half-dead body of Jesus which was given to Joseph for burial.

Objection: Position of the women

"One Gospel says the women stood afar off and another says that the Mother of Jesus and Mary of Magdala were at the foot of the cross." Why could not some of the women or even all of them for that matter be near the cross at one moment and far off at another? But the titles on the cross as recorded by the various evangelists are slightly different! They are substantially identical, and it is quite possible that as the title was written in three languages there may have been some difference in the wording. And lastly we come to the remarkable occurrences which are alleged to have taken place at the death of Christ, namely, the earthquake, the darkness, the rending of the temple's veil and the resurrection of many bodies. Here is another field for the critic. And first of all he exclaims, that in the narration of these, as of other wonderful events, the Scriptural writers express no astonishment, but chronicle them as if they were events of every day occurrence, and so show them to be legendary, and give cause for doubt as to the rest of the story. The writers are not compiling a treatise in explanation or defence

Objection: Titles on cross

Objection: Marvellous occurrences

of Christianity. The Gospels are not chronological records but merely memoirs. They briefly record some of the events which took place, and for the benefit not of the world in general, but of people already acquainted with them. It would then have been incongruous and out of place to enter into exclamations of astonishment. It is stated by some of the writers, that darkness came over the scene when Jesus died, that there was an earthquake and that the rocks were riven asunder. This is borne out by Tacitus, Josephus and the Talmud, as well as by early Christian tradition. Josephus speaks of the mysterious extinction of one of the lights in the golden candlestick forty years before the destruction of the Temple, that is about this very time; and the Talmud refers to a preternatural opening of the Temple gates at this period. That earthquakes were not unknown at Jerusalem, we know from the history of the earthquake which occurred whilst the Temple was being rebuilt by order of the Emperor Julian.[1] "But," objects the sceptic, "how comes it that these marvellous events did not affect the by-standers, or the Jewish authorities, and convince them that they had done a great wrong?" On hardened hearts such wonders have little effect. When volcanic fire and lava have swept down

Why astonishment is not expressed in Gospels

These occurrences corroborated by Tacitus, Josephus and Talmud

Why these wonders had so little effect

[1] Socrates, *H.E.*, iii. 30.

on a doomed city, we read that such a moment was chosen for the commission of the most awful crimes. The well-disposed may be impressed and converted, the hard-hearted are but plunged deeper into their evil doings. They did affect the centurion and some of the bystanders, if we believe the Gospel narrative. It is not to be wondered at that the priests and scribes and Pharisees were not moved, for people whose minds are made up on a certain point, and who are thoroughly possessed by one dominant idea, are rarely moved from their opinion by anything that may occur. They always have a natural explanation ready at hand. The earthquake, with the darkness which so often precedes and accompanies it, was to these people a natural event which happened to take place at that particular moment. The rending open of the rock caves, wherein the dead were resting, was but a natural sequence of the shaking of the earth; and if a light was extinguished in the Temple at that moment, under the circumstances there was nought to wonder at. If the Temple gates were thus loosened and thrown open, or if the big veil was torn so that the Holy of Holies was exposed, it was the earthquake that did it. And so no effect is produced on these people. As they would have said, "It is only the vulgar masses who read into all such things the hand of God". "But at all

events," it is objected, "one evangelist states that many of those who had been buried arose and appeared in Jerusalem, and thus Christ was not the first to rise from the dead." This objection comes from not carefully reading the statement in the Gospel, which distinctly says that these apparitions took place *after* Christ was Himself risen from the dead. "How then," it may be asked, "if that occurred, did it not produce a sensation in Jerusalem at least amongst those to whom the dead appeared?" No doubt it did, and we have no evidence to the contrary. And last of the objections concerning the Crucifixion with which time and space will permit us to deal, we shall refer to the case of the penitent thief related by Luke.

Objection: Resurrection of the cave-buried bodies. Only after Christ's resurrection

"But it produced no sensation!"

"Your thief," says the critic, "was a prodigy, for he had faith in the divinity of Jesus, whereas the Apostles were still in their unbelief". Why not? He was a penitent thief at the point of death, and surely God could reward his penitence by an insight denied even to Apostles, did He choose to do so. Before concluding our remarks upon the crucifixion and death of Christ, we should like to ask a question of those who deny that Jesus died on Calvary. If He did not die then, as history testifies, when and where did that event occur? If writers deny a well-acknowledged fact, they are supposed to have some alternative evidence to give

Objection: The penitent thief

If Jesus did not die on Calvary, where then?

in support of their assertion—evidence, not supposition and theory. Where is the proof that Christ died elsewhere? When and under what circumstances? It is impossible to follow all the vagaries of the carping critic. We have attempted to deal with the serious objections, and we can assure the reader that he has only to look these difficulties fairly in the face to solve most of them.

Conclusion: Jesus died on Calvary

We may then here conclude our treatment of the crucifixion and death of Christ. We have seen these events established as historical facts alike by pagan, Jewish and Christian testimony, and we have found the Scriptural evidence corroborative and corroborated.

CHAPTER VI

THE RESURRECTION

I. Historical Argument

Necessity of proving the Resurrection

Jesus Christ may have been an historical character; His teaching may have been sublime and unprecedented—He may have laid down His life upon the cross as a testimony to His life's work, but that does not prove Him to be God. Nay, we may say that if He claimed to be the long-expected deliverer, the Messiah, His work was in some sense a failure if all ended with death, for the very people to whom He came especially, rejected and still reject Him. How then does it come to pass that the Christian world claims for Him the title of the Godhead? It is no new claim. From earliest times it has been handed down. The Emperor Julian (born A.D. 331) reproached the Christians with worshipping a dead Jew.[1] Pliny the Viceroy of Bithynia writing to the Emperor Trajan (98-117) many years after the crucifixion, says that even at that early date the Christians were very numerous, and worshipped Jesus as their God. He put some of them upon the rack in order

Jesus always regarded as God

Testimony of Pliny

[1] Cyril Alex. and præf. Julian, vi. 194.

to discover their principles, and "they confessed," he writes, "that they used to assemble together before dawn to sing praise to Christ as their God. . . . Seeing, however, the number of its (Christianity's) followers, I have thought it expedient to have your opinion on the subject, for members of very high rank and either sex, are imperilled by it. Towns, villages and countries are infected on all sides by this superstition. The temples and the Gods are almost deserted, and sacrifices are scarcely ever offered."[1] Thus at the very start of Christianity we have pagan testimony to the worship of Jesus as God. And yet this Jesus died the death of a slave at Jerusalem, and His lifeless body was laid into the grave. If all ended with His crucifixion how is He God? How came His followers to raise Him to the rank of divinity? Something extraordinary must then have happened—some great and startling miracle have taken place after His death to proclaim Him other than merely human. As Dante says:—

Yet he died a slave's death

Some unique event must have caused the idea

Dante

> "That all the world," said I, "should have been turned
> To Christian, and no miracle been wrought,
> Would in itself be such a miracle,
> The rest were not an hundredth part so great."[2]

What had occurred?

What then had occurred, or had been alleged to have occurred, in order to explain the numerous

[1] *Epp.* l., x. 97. [2] *Parad.*, xxiv., 108.

converts to the worship of Jesus as their God? It is stated by the Christian Church that Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day, with the same body which had been laid lifeless in the grave —rose again by His own power, and that this body was endowed with new attributes not ordinarily pertaining to the human frame, and that He died no more, but ascended into Heaven. Assuredly, if this be true, Jesus Christ was God, for none but God could work so great a marvel. Here then we have the reason why, as Pliny says, the early Christians worshipped the Crucified, and here again we have the explanation of the numerous conversions to this new religion. "But," it may be asked, "were these converts justified in their belief? Is it a fact that this miracle took place?" That is the subject we are now about to consider. Upon the answer depends the life of Christianity. Paul recognises this when he says: "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our teaching vain, and your faith is also vain". It was the one great fact which stood prominently forward in the teaching of the early Christian Church. It was the seal set upon the life and doctrines of Jesus, which proved that He was no mere teacher sent from God, but was that very God Himself. The whole authority and position of Christian teaching are based upon the Godhead of its Founder, for without that God-

Resurrection alleged as that event

Is it a fact?

Paul's testimony to the importance of the subject

Christianity built on it

Remove the Resurrection and Christianity falls (M. l'Abbé Frémont)

head, it is but a human society. The very groundwork of the existence and aim of the Christian Church are taken away, if we remove the Resurrection. As the Abbé Frémont[1] says: "Un fait historique remplit toutes les conditions nécessaires pour que l'esprit humain y puisse adherer avec une certitude inébranlable quand il a été frappant, remarquable, solennel, quand il a eu des temoins. Sûrs ou très nombreux, quand ces temoins ont été disinteressés, persévérants, héroiques, et quand ce fait ne saurait été arraché du tissu génèral de l'histoire, sans déchirer ce tissu tout entier." If we take away the Resurrection, Christianity has lost its foundation. We shall show that this event is unique, and has had the most ample testimony in its favour, both in the character and number of its witnesses, who were clearly disinterested and heroic.

Objection. "An age of miracles"

It is alleged that during the active ministry of Christ He worked numerous miracles, even raising the very dead, and we are told by many critics that if such events occurred, it is more than strange that so few believed in Him. This strange indifference which followed, say they, can only be explained, either by assuming that the Gospel story is a myth, or by the fact that it was "an age of miracles," an age in which superstition was so general, that no extraordinary events had any real or lasting

[1] *Lettres à l'Abbé Loisy*, 1904, p. 64.

influence upon the popular mind. Men saw the supernatural in everyday occurrences which are now explicable by science. Either Christ wrought these wonders, or He did not. If He did, and the world at that time was sunk in superstition, then we can understand why they did so little good. If He did not work them, then we are at a loss to understand the extent of His influence in an age which demanded wonders, before it would listen to a new religious teacher. We know that the Jews at the time of Christ were given up to superstition, magic, and wonder-working. They vied with each other in it. It formed an integral part of their daily life, as old writers tell us. Hence is it explicable that little effect was produced upon them by any wonders that Christ wrought. Yet after His death some great and quite unique event must have occurred, which arrested their attention, and converted them into followers of the Crucified. The more superstition was prevalent, the more striking and singular must that event have been, which could produce, not merely a sensation, but a permanent change in the life, habits, and religious sentiments of these devotees of magic. If Christ's miracles in His lifetime worked so little effect, what was it that after His death transformed, not merely Jews, but Pagans into Christians, and won converts in all the then

Why Christ's miracles had so little effect

Only a greater proof of reality of Resurrection

A self-worked Resurrection unknown before

known world? Evidently something very marvellous, some miracle that had no precedent. And in all the world's history was it never known before, that one had risen from the dead by his own unaided power. Pagan gods had mythical stories related of them, in which they rose from death to life, but these were myths and their very followers only laughed at them. In Hebrew story the dead had been brought to life at the prayer of a prophet; but none had ever raised himself. There was then no precedent in real history for such an event. And amongst the Jews the very idea of a self-worked resurrection from the dead was unknown. Yet it was these very Jews who made the statement that Jesus had so risen. Whence the conception? Was it a far-fetched fancy, or a fact? Let us see.

The greatest proof of the Resurrection—the origin of the Christian Church

No greater proof can be given that the Resurrection is an historical fact, and no mere fancy, than the origin of the Christian Church. Consider what had happened. Forsaking their daily vocation, their friends and home and old associations, a small band of followers had gathered round Jesus as the Messiah, and followed Him wherever He went. These disciples had learnt to love their Master, and all their hopes were centred in Him. To sit upon His right hand or His left, to be the chosen ones in His new Kingdom, they had forsaken all and followed Him. They had listened to

His teaching and His prophecies, had been made His especial friends, and were looking to the day when their reward should be great in the new Kingdom of Israel, which He should found. He was the Messiah, the expected One who should wrest the sceptre from the nations, and put it into the hands of the chosen people. And what might they not expect from Him when as King He should rule over the peoples of the world? If He had spoken to them of a Kingdom that was not earthly, they understood Him not—if He had spoken of the sufferings in store for Him, they comprehended not —if he had spoken of His death and Resurrection, their minds were darkened, and they did not understand; for but one idea had possession of them—the earthly reign of an earthly monarch. And so it came to pass, that when they saw their Master in the hands of His enemies, dragged from pillar to post, condemned and crucified, they all forsook Him and fled. And when the Sufferer bowed His head in death, and all was over, what a blow it must have been to their fondly cherished hopes and dreams! They had given up all, home and friends and prospects for the sake of one who had led them on —to what? To derision, disgrace and persecution. "The Messiah" was dead and Israel was yet a slave. They were human beings like ourselves today, with the same feelings and passions and weak-

Love of apostles for Christ

They expected an earthly kingdom

Hence on His arrest they desert Him

What they had given up and what they had earned

Their dismay and disappointment

nesses. And how bitter must have been their chagrin! Whatever love they had for their Master must, at all events for the time, have suffered from a severe shock. For had He not led them to hope for earthly distinction and reward, and now He was dead and they were friendless, homeless and forsaken? Whatever sweet memories still lived of the days they had spent with Him, were now, in this hour of their bitter disappointment, sadly dimmed. He had cruelly deceived them. That was the one natural thought at that moment. And in death all was ended. As we have said, the idea of a self-worked Resurrection could not have been in their minds, for it was contrary to all the experience of the human race. It was unknown as an historical fact. There only remained the possibility of some great prophet who should raise Him from the dead. And neither could such an idea have been in their minds at that moment, for who was to work so great a marvel? There was no Elijah among the prophets, and John the Baptist was dead; whence then could they have dreamt of His Resurrection? The very embalming of Christ's body as narrated in the gospels, and the coming of the women with spices on the Easter morning, show that even so late as the third day such a notion was far from them. Moreover, the idea of a suffering Messiah was almost unknown

No idea of a Resurrection either self-worked or otherwise

Idea of a suffering Messiah hardly known

amongst the Jews. There were, it is true, a very few who held it, but they were as a drop in the ocean. And we cannot believe that these ignorant fishermen were likely to be imbued with so unusual an opinion in Jewry. But even had they been, there was one circumstance in the death of Christ, which would at once remove all idea of Messiahship from His Name and Person. He had been crucified. He had died the accursed death upon a tree. A suffering Messiah there might be—a crucified Messiah there could not be. Such was Jewish teaching. Paul bears witness to this, when he says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every man that hangeth on a tree".[1] It is perhaps in reference to this curse that Jesus Himself cries out in His agony, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" When the Christians in their arguments with the Jews, alleged that Jesus was the anointed one, the latter pointed to His crucifixion, as Tertullian bears witness, and Trypho, the Jew, in his dialogue with Justin Martyr (A.D. 150). This Hebrew opinion was founded upon the saying in Deuteronomy (xxi. 23): "Cursed is every man who hath hung upon a tree". Jesus had so suffered, and thus He could not be the Messiah—least of all could He be God. And yet, within a very

The curse of God on crucifixion

borne witness to by Old Testament, Paul and Tertullian, Trypho and Justin Martyr

[1] Gal. iii. 13.

Yet in a few weeks, apostles declare the Resurrection

few weeks these cowardly disciples of the Crucified, these men whose hopes had been shattered, whose expectations had been disappointed—these men who had seen all end in death upon a tree of shame—these fervent Jews whose life, whose all, was centred in the religion they professed, and who by their very religion were bound to see in the crucifixion the blasting of all their hopes—these very men, in a few short weeks are changed to bold and brave proclaimers of the Messiahship of Jesus. Their fears are at an end, their disbelief is dispelled, they are full of love once more: openly they proclaim

What has caused this change?

that Jesus Christ is the chosen one of Israel, the Saviour, the incarnate God. What has wrought this wondrous change? What has removed the curse of death upon the tree? What has happened that could have convinced them so definitely, that the dead Man was, after all, the very Son of God—

Only the Resurrection could explain it

God made man? Surely nothing short of the Resurrection from the dead of Him who was so crucified. Only in such manner could Heaven have borne witness to the divinity of the Crucified, and changed the curse to blessing. This they alleged, and declared—that they themselves had seen and conversed with Him—that whereas He had been dead, He was now alive again; and for this truth they were ready to go before the Sanhedrin, before the rulers of the people, to suffer and even to die.

Here then is the great proof of the Resurrection as an historical fact. As we have said, than the circumstances under which Christianity came into being, no more convincing evidence can be given. It is impossible on any other supposition to account for the remarkable change from the gloom of Calvary to the brightness of Easter. But an objection may here be made. Matthew tells us[1] that the chief priests and the Pharisees on Saturday morning went to Pilate, and asked for a guard to watch over the tomb, because they had remembered that this "seducer said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perchance his disciples come, and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error shall be worse than the first." Does not this show that there was an idea of resurrection in the air, and that the Jewish authorities understood the prophecy of Christ with regard to His rising again better than the Apostles themselves? It certainly does show that they had understood Him to say that He would rise again on the third day, but it also quite as definitely shows that they did not believe in His ability to do so, for they demand the guard, not to prevent Him from rising, but to hinder

Objection: The priests ask for guard—hence there *was* an idea of Resurrection

Not to prevent Resurrection but disciples from stealing body

[1] Matt. xxvii. 62 ff.

the disciples from removing the body and then alleging the Resurrection. Those who made this request to Pilate were men of learning and ability, and may readily have better understood the meaning of what Jesus said than the Disciples, who were for the most part ignorant men and cowed by fear at the apprehension of their Leader. Moreover the statement in which Jesus alleged that He would raise His body, was brought up in evidence against Him in the Judgment hall, from which at least all the disciples save one or two were absent.

Why John "saw and believed"

And may not this very fact explain why John, who was at the trial of Jesus, and heard the prophecy made a prominent cause of offence, when he entered the tomb, "saw and believed," for it would come back to his mind at such a moment? We have already explained that the very idea of a self-worked Resurrection was unknown to the Jews, and hence the statement of Christ could only have been met with ridicule, if indeed it was understood in that sense by the Sanhedrin. They clearly thought that His followers might have had the idea of removing the body on the strength of their Master's statement, with the object of alleging the Resurrection, but that such an intention could not have been present is shown by their cowardice, their desertion and the disappointment of all their hopes. Why should these men whose lives had

Why should disciples wish to remove the body?

been spoiled, and who had been made apparently the dupes of a self-deluded man or an impostor, who had seen what they believed to be God's curse descend upon the crucified ; why should they wish to make their own last state worse than the first, by stealing a dead body and then declaring that it had risen again ? With what motive ? What had they to gain, save ridicule or even persecution ? Surely they had already sacrificed enough for a dream they had deemed a reality. The best thing they could do was to return to their work and make up for lost time.

Rapid spread of Christianity among Jews

As we have said, the best proof of the reality of the Resurrection is the origin of Christianity. There are however many other proofs apart from Scripture altogether. The widespread and rapid conversion of large numbers of Jews at a time when the evidence was yet fresh and capable of examination, is a striking testimony to the truth of Christ's rising from the dead. Monotheism was of the essence of Judaism, and the worship of Jehovah was the very life of a son of Israel. Paganism with its plurality of gods was an abhorrence, and all claims for Divinity, save those of the God of Abraham were blasphemy unspeakable. How comes it then that these very Jews are found to declare that Jesus the crucified is God ? How comes it that they proclaim His Divinity and

worship Him as Jehovah incarnate? What has changed them from strict Jews to Christians? There is only one thing that could have done so, and that was their conviction that in Jesus they recognised the Omnipotent who had proved Himself such by rising from the dead. And they lived at the very time of the alleged Resurrection and had every facility to prove or disprove the statement. And we cannot imagine them all to have been fools, ready dupes of any impostor in so grave a matter as religion. Moreover, in making this change in their faith they incurred the hostility of their own people, the ridicule of the indifferent, and the persecution of the Romans, to whom a new religion was an object of suspicion. And the Pagan? what could have induced him to give up the gods of his forefathers for the worship of this man of Galilee? Why should he forsake luxurious pleasures of life, the gratification of his passions, the comradeship of his fellows, for a religion that called for self-denial and suffering and even martyrdom? Surely we must allow that common sense and sound judgment are not the monopoly of the twentieth century, and even if there were ignorance and superstition in those days, yet there were men who could demand a reason for so great a sacrifice. In the writings that have come down to us from those early days we find profound thought, careful

Why should Pagans change their lives?

judgment and a critical spirit. And the early converts from Paganism embraced many such men. Were they then going to admit that their gods were impostors, and that a crucified slave was the only God, unless they had had striking proof that such was the case? Only the Resurrection as a fact can explain such a remarkable change. If the rising again of Christ from the dead were not a well-known and well-attested fact, we cannot explain the astonishing conversion of so many Jews and Pagans at a time when the occurrence was so easy of proof or disproof. If as we have said it was an age of superstition, and miracles were regarded as events of every-day occurrence, how comes it that the miracle of the Resurrection worked so great an effect? Only on the supposition that it was unique and a fact. The very observance of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath is a witness to the Resurrection. On Sinai God had ordered the Jews to keep the Saturday as sacred to His service, and yet we find these same Jews changing that day to Sunday. Would they have dared to do so, had they not believed on sound evidence that they had the authority of the same God in the Person of Jesus Christ? Pseudo-Barnabas, who was probably the companion of Paul, in a work which critics variously date from A.D. 92 to A.D. 125, says (xv) that Sunday was

There were well read and critical men in those days

The observance of Sunday a proof

Barnabas witness to Sunday

sacred as a festival and as a commemoration of the rising of Jesus from the tomb, the Jewish Sabbath being set aside. "Wherefore," says he, "we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead." Justin Martyr (beheaded A.D. 165) and Tertullian (A.D. 150 to 230) give the same testimony.

Justin Martyr and Tertullian witness to same

The whole worship of the early Christians was built upon the Resurrection of Christ; their hope of rising in their own bodies, their care for the dead, their prayers, their services, all bore witness to this vital teaching on which Christianity was founded. In the catacombs, in old writings, everywhere we find early testimony to the fact of the Resurrection. And if Jesus had not really risen from the dead as His followers alleged, what was easier for the Sanhedrin than to open the tomb and produce in triumph the dead body of the crucified? The assertion of the Resurrection was made but a few weeks after the crucifixion and yet nothing is done. And the chief priests and Pharisees had shown great energy and determination to prevent the possibility of this assertion by the disciples by having a guard placed at the tomb. Clearly the body was there on Saturday when the guard was set, for it is impossible to believe that these zealous priests would place the soldiers before the tomb, without first looking in to see that the Apostles

Christian worship and hope witness

If not risen why not produce the body

Body there on Saturday morning

had not stolen the body on the Friday evening. It could not naturally issue of itself from the tomb, for the hands and arms were tightly bound to the side with linen clothes, and the legs and feet in like manner were carefully enswathed in bandages, and the whole body was deeply buried in spices and the head wrapped round with spices and fine linen. And the two stones were there to guard the entrance, and even had Jesus been only in a swoon, His intense weakness made it impossible that He could have freed Himself from all these encumbrances and pushed away the heavy stone. And certainly He could not naturally have done so in any case without attracting the attention of the guard. Yet, before the soldiers departed, the body had gone, and Jewish tradition has always attempted to explain the disappearance of the body by alleging that the disciples came and stole it whilst the guard slept. Is it conceivable that these soldiers who had been placed on duty by their superiors, whose great interest it was to prevent the removal of the body before the Sunday, should have been so negligent for twenty-four hours as to sleep at their post? It is absurd. And if it be alleged that the soldiers gave testimony to the theft of the body whilst they slept, we are face to face with a palpable absurdity. Well might St. Augustine say: "What sayest thou, then, O

Even if in swoon Christ could not have freed Himself naturally

Body though closely guarded gone on Sunday morning

Ridiculous to suppose soldiers slept

St. Augustine's comment

miserable cunning? Thou summonest sleeping witnesses. Truly thou sleepest thyself, that in searching such devices, hast failed."[1] And so ridiculous is this that Jews have now given up this tradition as an explanation of the Resurrection, and have recourse to the vision theory with which we shall deal later. It was from some one or other of the soldiers that Matthew heard the story both of the particulars of the Resurrection and of the action of the Jewish authorities. How then did the lifeless body of the crucified leave the tomb?

Resurrection alone can explain empty tomb

Only by the Resurrection, for all other attempts to explain it have failed, and are not feasible. The chief of these attempts is that defended by Albert Reville in his work *Jesus of Nazareth* (ii., p. 461 ff.) in which he says that the Sanhedrin took it away as a measure of prudence to prevent the disciples from being able to allege the Resurrection.

Reville's theory of removal by Sanhedrin

"Such then is the theory which we presume to offer after eliminating the other hypotheses which do not appear to us acceptable. The body was taken away by the Jews who acted in such a way that it could not be known afterwards what had become of it. We do not offer it as though it were capable of vigorous demonstration. It has at least the advantages that it fits in with known facts." He is seeking to save the disciples from the rare allega-

[1] In Psalm lxiii., Oxford Translation.

tion of wilful deception. But if this supposition be true, why did not the Sanhedrin bring contempt and ridicule upon the Apostles when they preached Christ risen, by producing the body, by pointing to its whereabouts, or by declaring that such removal had been effected by themselves? Yet no such action was taken, and we know that only a few weeks had elapsed when the disciples preached the Resurrection. And here it may be well to deal with some objections that have been alleged against this story of the guards, which is alike a Jewish and Christian tradition. It has been argued against the probability of this account that the chief priests and Pharisees would never have desecrated the Sabbath Day by entering Pilate's court or sealing the tomb. They need not have violated that day by such an action, as it was not necessary for all to enter Pilate's house, and besides, here was a case of urgent necessity which in their opinion was of profound religious importance, and the obtaining of their request and the sealing of the tomb were a duty which they owed to their religion. And in any case, when men are profoundly moved by some dominant idea, they will rarely fail to find means of satisfying their consciences in the quest of the object they have in view. But it is urged: "It is impossible to imagine Roman guards sleeping at their posts". We have no evidence that they were

Roman soldiers. Rather the contrary. Pilate tells the Jews that they have a guard and that they are to send it. He was not interested in a Hebrew squabble, and whereas, in a judicial punishment he sends the Roman soldiers and does not tell the Jews that they are to superintend the crucifixion, when it comes to a matter so insignificant for him, his mode of action changes. He is not going to waste his soldiers' time in idly watching by a supposed malefactor's grave, on the wild supposition that He might rise again, or that His followers might steal His body. The guards, moreover, make their report to the priests, and not to Pilate as the Roman soldiers would have had to do. The priests promise them immunity, because, though Jewish soldiery, they had acted under orders from the Roman governor, and to say they had slept at their post was at least to incur the contempt, if not the punishment of Pilate. And again it is urged that if the Sanhedrin had learned from the guard this remarkable story of the Resurrection, we cannot believe that so learned and dignified a body would have acted in such a manner, or even refused some measure of credence to the story. But most probably all the members did not so act. And even those who did, may have been in perfectly good faith—although the Gospel narrative would seem to cast doubt upon it. They ridiculed

the story, but fearing that it might influence the populace, did what in their opinion was the best thing to prevent the people from being imposed upon by the silly terrors of the soldiers. How then, it is asked, did the story get out, seeing that the soldiers had been bribed to silence and were in fear of reprimand? That is a matter of every-day experience, even when the strictest measures of secrecy are employed. Even Cabinet secrets leak out sometimes. And it is quite conceivable that some of the Sanhedrin may have been influenced by the story, investigated it, and found it true, and become Christians as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done, and then such converts would speak of the matter. And the same may have been the case with some of the soldiers, and it is quite conceivable that it was from some one or other of these soldiers that St. Matthew heard the story, both of the particulars of the Resurrection, and of the action of the Jewish authorities.

Evidence for Resurrection strong

In the presence of all these facts we are at a loss to understand the position of those persons who declare that the Resurrection is without reasonable evidence. On the contrary, no fact of by-gone history has so much and such striking testimony in its support. If it be lawful and just to form a judicial decision which involves the taking away of life, on circumstantial evidence, how much

more so is it in a case like the present, where we have not merely circumstantial evidence, but testimony the strongest which can influence human judgment? True it is that none saw the body of the risen Jesus pass out of the tomb—unless it were the soldiers on guard—but equally true is it that the body which had been safely guarded in the grave, had disappeared during that vigil, and save on the assumption of the Resurrection, there is no other probable explanation. Moreover, as we shall show, the same lifeless body was seen by many, re-endowed with life in the Person of the living Jesus. It has been argued by some who profess belief in Christianity, that the actual Resurrection of the body is not a necessary part of the Easter story. They would have us believe that God removed the body, united again to the soul, transferring both to Heaven. Others again would have us believe, that after all, the body remained in the grave all the time, and that its dust still remains in the tomb, wherever that may precisely be. Matthew Arnold has written :—

Assertion that Resurrection of body not vital

> While we believed, on Earth He went,
> And open stood His grave,
> Men call'd from chamber, church and tent;
> And Christ was by to save.
>
> Now He is dead! Far hence He lies
> In the lorn Syrian town:
> And on His grave, with shining eyes
> The Syrian stars look down.

But such writers, and those who side with them, can hardly claim to be Christians, for the very meaning of the Resurrection, as preached from the start of Christianity, has been the actual rising of the once lifeless body, reunited to the soul, and its reappearance to the Disciples. On this Christianity is built. There is not a particle of evidence to show that God reunited the soul to the body, and then removed the living Jesus direct to Heaven. It is a mere supposition. And that the lifeless body did not remain in the tomb and there decay, is evident from what we have already said, and will be more so from what we shall have to say still later.

Christianity built on physical Resurrection

Beyond the reference to Pagan authorities by early Christians implying a knowledge on the part of the former of the story of the Resurrection, we have no direct non-Christian evidence, at least none is known to exist. Pagan witness to the fact of the Resurrection without the conversion of its writer would of course appear ridiculous and insincere.

No definite Pagan evidence, and the reason

Of course, as we have pointed out, the numerous conversions of Pagans who afterwards wrote in defence of the Resurrection, is really the best non-Christian evidence we can adduce, for it is the proof that the fact became known to these people, who verified, and accepted it. As Pagans they

Early Christian testimony

satisfied themselves of the fact, and as honest men they changed their religion, and then wrote in defence of Christianity. Thus in adducing early Christian testimony to the Resurrection, we are giving the witness of men who had not been brought up in the new faith, but who became converted to it, from the worship of false gods.

Let us then see some of the evidence which these converts give us.

Aristides

Aristides, a philosopher of Athens, wrote an apology in defence of Christianity to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161). A Syriac translation was found in 1889. In it we read as follows: "The Christians reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the son of God most high; and it is said that God came down from Heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. This is taught from that Gospel, which, a little while ago, was spoken among them as being preached; wherein, if you also will read, you will comprehend the power that is upon it. This Jesus, then, was born of the tribe of the Hebrews; and he had twelve disciples, in order that a certain dispensation of his might be fulfilled. He was pierced by the Jews; and he died, and was buried; and they say that after three days, he rose, and ascended to

Heaven. And then these twelve disciples went forth unto the known parts of the world, and taught concerning his greatness, with all humility and sobriety: and on this account, those also who to-day believe in this preaching, are called Christians, who are well known."[1]

Polycarp (A.D. 156-166), a martyr for Christianity, who was a personal friend of St. John, himself an eye-witness of the risen Christ, had ample opportunities of verifying the fact. He affirms the fact of the Resurrection in his Epistle *Ad Phil.* (c. ix.), which we have already quoted in dealing with the death of Christ. Polycarp

Irenæus (martyred A.D. 202) who was the disciple of Polycarp, writing against heresies (A.D. 180) says (*l.c.* iii), "For after that our Lord rose from the dead," etc. Irenæus

Justin Martyr, who died for the Christian religion by martyrdom in A.D. 165, also wrote an apology to the same Emperor, and to Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 150. He says: "When we say that the Logos, who is the first birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus, our Teacher, was crucified, and died, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, we pro- Justin Martyr

[1] *Apol. Arist.*, ed and translated by J. Kendel Holmes; Harnack's *History of Dogma*, vol. ii.

pound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter ".

Ignatius

Ignatius (A.D. 115) a contemporary of the Apostles, who became Bishop of Antioch only thirty-seven years after the Ascension, is another witness.[1] He also tells us that Sunday was kept holy on account of the Resurrection, and in writing to the Trallians, says, that Jesus was truly raised from the dead. In his Epistle to the Smyrnæans, which is allowed to be genuine, is a quotation from an apocryphal gospel, probably that to the Hebrews, in which he writes (chapter iii.): "For I know that also after His Resurrection He was in the flesh, and I believe that He is so now. And when He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, Lay hold, handle Me and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit. And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced by His flesh and spirit." Ignatius here asserts his belief in the Resurrection, and gives us evidence of its acceptance even in writings other than the Canonical Gospels.

Clement

In the Epistle of Clement, a hearer of Paul, we read as follows: "The Apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ, from God. For, having received their command and being thor-

[1] Vide *Ad Smyrn.*, cap. iii.

oughly assured by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, they went abroad, publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand."[1]

In his Epistle to the Corinthians (A.D. 95) he discusses the Resurrection at some length.

The Apostles' Creed

We have already referred to the Apostles' Creed as a witness to the death of Christ. It also witnesses to His Resurrection. Dr. Gasquet says: "The Apostles' Creed as we now have it, is slightly altered, and expanded from the Baptismal Symbol of the Church of Rome in the middle of the second century, which, in all probability, is more ancient still, and goes back to the immediate successors of the Apostles".[2]

II. St. Paul's Testimony

St. Paul's evidence

And now we come to deal with the evidence given us in the collection of documents known as the New Testament. We purpose to begin with those of St. Paul who is the earliest of the writers. That he existed, and wrote at least several of the Epistles that bear his name, is allowed by the great majority of the "higher critics".

"The city of Tarsus is nowhere named in the

[1] *Ep. Clem. ad Roman.*, c. 43.

[2] Studies contributed to the *Dublin Review* by the late Dr. J. R. Gasquet. *The Apostles' Creed and Rule of Faith* (reviewed (1) Oct., 1888, and (2) April, 1889), Westminster Art and Book Co., 1904.

Pauline Epistles, or elsewhere in the New Testament, except the Book of Acts. But the tradition which makes that city the birthplace of Paul, does not conflict with probability."[1] "The letters written by Paul yield evidence that he had undergone training as a lawyer,—that is an expert in the Torah, and its interpretation" (p. 42). "He was a thorough-going zealot. With an additional measure of fanaticism, he would have joined the Dagger men, the Sicarii. As it was, he became an iniquisitor, a persecutor." In a footnote, Gould says with reference to Paul's presence at the stoning of Stephen, that Hausrath accepts it as probable.

The character of St. Paul

Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, Paul was a man of learning and judgment, a strong personality, with definite religious views, and a hater of innovations. Hence we find him a sturdy opponent and a persecutor of the Christians. Leagued with the chief Jewish authorities, and a friend of the Sanhedrin, none was less likely to become a convert to the new religion. And yet it is this very Paul who not only embraces Christianity, but becomes one of its chief teachers and apostles, and for it suffers persecution, and even death itself. If any man living at that time were in a position to investigate the whole story of the Cross and the Resurrection, surely it was he. He had every

[1] Gould, iii., 41.

access to the Jewish authorities, and it was doubtless from them he learned that Jesus was an innovator, and a blasphemer who had been crucified, and that His followers were heretics who were founding a new religion, the God of which was this same Jesus. In his zeal for the worship of Jehovah he threw himself headlong into the work of crushing this dangerous heresy. Yet, in the very midst of his work, he became a Christian. Why? What had happened? Clearly he had been convinced against his will of the truth of what these followers of the crucified asserted. The Resurrection had become for him a reality. It must have been a great wrench for him to separate himself from all his friends, to become an object of loathing and hatred to his companions of the Sanhedrin. Nothing short of the most serious conviction could have wrought so great a change. We shall proceed to inquire on what grounds this conviction was founded. Before doing so, however, let us see which of his alleged writings are accepted as genuine and authentic by the modern critics.

Authenticity of writings

Ferdinand Christian Baur, one of the most celebrated of the nineteenth century negative critics, regarded Romans i.-xiv., both Epistles to the Corinthians, and that to the Galatians, as written by Paul. Renan says, in his preface to *St. Paul:* "The Epistles which are indisputable,

and not disputed, are, that to the Galatians, the two to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans. Although some objections are made against them, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians and that to the Philippians are certain. Despite the fact that rare objections are made against the Epistle to the Colossians, which has for an addendum the letter to Philemon, its authenticity is probable. I hold the Epistle to the Colossians as authentic." The opinions of Baur on this point are generally held by the critics, although, of course, as usual, there are to be found extremists such as Bruno Bauer, Steck, Loman, and Piersen, who go to the length of denying that Paul wrote any of the Epistles attributed to him.

The date of St. Paul's conversion is variously given, as the year after the Crucifixion, *i.e.*, A.D. 31, or as A.D. 36 or 41. After his conversion, St. Paul went to Arabia, then returned to Damascus, and three years later visited Jerusalem, where he made a fortnight's stay, seeing Peter and James. Fourteen years later he paid another visit to the Holy City, and met Peter, James and John. His death at Rome took place A.D. 64 or 67.

Dates of the Epistles

The Epistles to the Corinthians were written in A.D. 57; those to the Galatians and Romans A.D. 58, whilst it is allowed that, if genuine, the Epistle to the Thessalonians bears date A.D. 53,

and that to the Philippians, written at Rome, must have been written A.D. 62. In the year A.D. 64 was the great fire in Nero's reign, for which so many Christians were put to death.

Now what is the evidence which Paul gives us as to the Resurrection in the undisputed Epistles? In that to the Romans he says that Christ was "predestinated the Son of God in power according to the spirit of sanctification, by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead,"[1] and in the fifth chapter (v. 6), he speaks of the death of Jesus as accomplished "for the ungodly"; and again, "Christ died for us".[2] In the sixth chapter[3] he further says: "For we are buried together with Him in baptism unto death; that, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection"; and in verse 9 he says, "Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him." In the eighth chapter he writes: "And if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies". A little later he continues, "Who is he

Evidence from Romans.

[1] Chap. i. 4. [2] Verse 9. [3] Verses 4 and 5.

that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea, that is risen also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us".[1] In the tenth chapter[2] we read: "This is the word of faith which we preach. That if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Evidence from 1st Corinthians

In his first Epistle to the Corinthians[3] St. Paul gives us an account of some of the appearances which Christ made after His Resurrection. "For I delivered unto you, first of all, which I also received, How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. And that He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time." Here there can be no question that St. Paul puts the appearance of Jesus to himself, on the same footing as that of the appearances to the Apostles, and to the five hundred. It was no subjective illusion. It was a real presence of the risen

[1] Verse 34. [2] Verses 8 and 9. [3] Chap. xv. 3-9.

Saviour, body and soul. His words cannot reasonably convey any other meaning; and, an attempt to read into them the idea that St. Paul meant anything else, is a quibbling, and a perversion of human language. Deny the Resurrection, and Paul's words are meaningless. Say that all these appearances are subjective,—that they are mere delusions and hallucinations, and it follows that the Apostle of the Gentiles must have been a deliberate deceiver, and have used words which he knew would convey the idea of a bodily resurrection, whereas he had in his mind quite a different idea. When a witness in his evidence makes use of words which naturally and clearly mean one thing, whereas he means another, such a witness is guilty of false testimony; yet no one charges Paul with this crime. The Apostle therefore means that all these appearances of the risen Christ —his own included—were real and true, and that Jesus who had been dead, had risen physically from the grave, and shown Himself to His followers. When Paul speaks of subjective visions, he uses unmistakable language to imply that fact. Compare, for instance, what he says in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians:[1] "If I must glory—it is not expedient indeed—but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a

[1] Chap. xii. 1-4.

man in Christ, above fourteen years ago—whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth—such an one rapt even to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth, that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter." Here is a totally different mode of speech. Paul gives us clearly to understand that he is speaking of visions and revelations, and he tells us definitely, that he knows not whether the subject of them was in the body, or out of it. There is no use of any such language when he speaks of the appearances of the risen Jesus. Words cannot be plainer.

In the celebrated fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul is arguing with these people about their own Resurrection, and is pointing out to them that it will be as real and true as that of Christ. They believed in the latter, but doubted their own; and he says, "If, according to man, I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me, if the dead rise no more?"[1] Christ's Resurrection is the pledge to him that he will rise, and that his sufferings will not have been in vain. And so he says again: "Now if Christ be preached that He rose again from the

[1] Verse 32.

dead, how do some among you say that there is no Resurrection from the dead? But, if there be no Resurrection from the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have given testimony against God that he hath raised up Christ; whom he hath not raised up, if the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that slept. For by a man came death, and by a man, the Resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."[1] His whole argument is based on the Resurrection of Jesus as an actual fact, and he assumes that his hearers grant that.

In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians[2] he again bears testimony to the reality of Christ's rising again. "And Christ died for us, that they also who live, may, not now live to themselves, but with Him who died for them, and rose again". Paul is no halting believer in the Resurrection; 2 Corinthians

[1] Verses 12-22. [2] Chap. v. 15.

and he had every means of knowing the truth, for he was a contemporary of the other Apostles. There were many of the five hundred witnesses also, who were living in his day, and who were known to him, as he bears witness. How dared he have appealed to them, if they were non-existent, or if the appearances were merely an hallucination? His hearers could have disproved his statement by an appeal to some of the five hundred. But, when Paul describes, in what appears to be their sequence in time, the various appearances of Christ after His Resurrection, we are told that he is in conflict with the other narratives contained in the Gospels, because he omits the appearance to Mary Magdalene, and also to the travellers on the way to Emmaus. But, *is* he intending to narrate *all* the incidents, or in their exact chronological order? He is speaking of what we may call the *official* appearances, the appearances to the duly appointed witnesses of the Resurrection; and it is the fact that women's testimony at that time was not received as such. The appearance on the way to Emmaus may not have been known to him at the time of his writing, or he may have been merely making a selection amongst the appearances. He does not say that Jesus *first of all* appeared to Cephas, though he begins with that appearance. It is a matter of common tradition, and is indeed

most probable, that Jesus appeared first of all to His Holy Mother. Yet neither Paul nor any of the Gospels speak of it. She had suffered as none other had done. Her maternal heart had truly been pierced as she saw her loved One tortured and agonised; and we cannot but believe that His first appearance was to her, whom, as the model of sons, He must have honoured and loved. We cannot regard the accounts in Paul's Epistles, or of those in the Synoptics, as intended to be either complete, or strictly chronological, and hence the use of the particles "after that," and "then" are not to be taken literally and as denoting exact sequence. They may denote sequence, but not to the exclusion of intermediate events. A traveller, for example, may leave London for Newcastle. Between his departure and arrival many things may happen. "After that" he had left London, he may have broken his journey at Peterborough, and stayed some time there, and "then" he may have remained in York, before reaching Newcastle. And at each place many events may have occurred. Yet, it is equally true to say that after leaving London he went to Newcastle.

Epistle to the Galatians

And now we come to the famous Epistle to the Galatians. Here, in its very first verse, Paul gives us additional testimony to the Resurrection of Christ, for he writes, "Paul, an Apostle, not of

men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead."[1] Paul is never tired of asserting the reality of the Resurrection. In season, and out of season, he refers to this wondrous event as a well known, and established fact. It is his foundation stone, on which he builds up the creed he preaches. A few verses farther on he proceeds to tell us that he cares not for pleasing man, neither has he received his doctrine from man, but from God, "For, I give you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me, is not according to man. For, neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion: how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. And I made progress in the Jews' religion, above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But, when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood, neither went I to Jerusalem to the Apostles who were before me, but I went unto Arabia, and again I returned

[1] Chap. i. 1.

to Damascus. Then after three years, I went to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles I saw none; saving James, the brother of the Lord. Now, the things which I write to you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judæa, which were in Christ. But they had heard only: He who persecuted us in times past, doth now preach the faith, which once he impugned: and they glorified God in me."[1] And he continues:[2] "Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up according to revelation, and communicated with them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but apart to them, who seemed to be something; lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain." He had gone up to discuss the subject of circumcision. On the occasion of his first visit he met Peter and James, three years after his conversion. He was in harmony with them, and we know that they preached the Resurrection, and asserted that they had seen and conversed with the risen Christ. Fourteen years later he returned to Jerusalem, and discussed a matter of discipline, and met Peter and James and John, and was in

[1] Chap. i. 11 to end. [2] Chap. ii. 1, 2,

harmony with them. "And, when they had known the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of followship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."[1] They had a common faith which was based upon the Resurrrection, as an historical fact; for we have seen that Paul makes his faith in Jesus dependent on the Resurrection, and he has placed the appearance of Christ to him upon the same objective and real footing, as those of the appearances to the Apostles. Can any testimony be stronger, that the risen Jesus appeared in the same way to Paul and Cephas, James and John, appeared in the flesh, with a living body, after its death upon the Cross? Can any testimony be stronger than that here given, in which Paul's experience is the same as that of the other Apostles?

Sabatier

As Sabatier has said, in speaking of the conversion of Paul: "It is bound up in an indissoluble way with that of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ itself. The solution to be given to the former depends upon the solution which has been given to the latter. He who accepts the Resurrection of the Saviour would be ill advised to cast doubt upon his apparition to the Apostles."[2] But it is

[1] Chap. i. 9. [2] *St. Paul*, p. 51, ed. 1891.

urged that Paul after his conversion did not take the trouble to go to Jerusalem, and corroborate the truth of the Resurrection by appealing to those who were alleged to have seen Jesus after His rising from the tomb. And thus he shows himself to have been an unreliable witness, for he did not investigate the matter properly. Not at all. He was violently opposed to Christianity—was an intimate personal friend of the Jewish authorities, and trusted by them. He had heard all they had to say upon the point, and was convinced that Jesus was an impostor. It is worse than useless to say that he was in doubt, and was struck by the heroism of his victims—that he was set thinking, and that thus, at last, he became convinced that he had taken the wrong course, and that after all the Christ might have been intended to be a spiritual Messiah. There is not the slightest evidence for such a supposition, and it is quite against all that Paul himself says in his acknowledged writings. He distinctly tells us: "Have not I seen Jesus Christ?" "Last of all He was seen by me." It is Jesus who appears to him and convinces him that he is wrong. He had himself seen the risen Jesus who had been crucified and died upon Calvary, and he was satisfied. Why should he go up to Jerusalem to inquire about that of which his own senses had convinced him? It was super-

Objection: Paul did not corroborate his experiences

fluous and foolish, and moreover it was to call in question the truthfulness and the command of Him who had spoken to and converted him. He needs no further evidence. He needs merely time to prepare himself for his new mission. And so he goes to Arabia for a while and then returns to Damascus and begins his mission work. Then after three years' apostolic work he seeks the acquaintance of those who were called before him, and then he learns from their own lips what others had told him of appearances that had taken place like to his own. He is so sure of his position that fourteen years elapse before he goes up again, and then it is only on a question of discipline, and because he wishes to be in complete harmony with the rest of the Church. Everything points to the reality of his own experience in seeing the risen Jesus and to the equal reality of the experience of the Apostles and the five hundred.

Objection: Paul was an epileptic

But "Paul was an epileptic and his vision of Jesus was the result of a diseased imagination". On what authority do these objectors allege that Paul was an epileptic? Because he says in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, referring to his vision and revelations:[1] "And lest the greatness of the revelation should lift me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet

[1] Chap. xii., 7, 8, and 9.

me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity." Why should "the sting of the flesh" be interpreted to mean epilepsy? Because in that way the critic can make it appear that Paul's mind may have been affected, as is sometimes the case in advanced stages of this complaint. Solely for that reason. And it is argued that as he was epileptic his vision of Christ was the result of a diseased imagination. In the first place, the assertion that "the sting of the flesh" was epilepsy is a gratuitous assumption with not a tittle of evidence in its support. In the next place all epileptics are not affected in their minds, but only some of those who by a long course of severe attacks have been greatly enfeebled, and hence even if Paul were an epileptic it does not follow that he was in consequence mentally affected. In the next place the whole meaning of the expression "Sting in the flesh" has been variously interpreted, by some as referring to a difficulty in speech or an affection of the eyes, by others as a temptation of the flesh. Others again hold that the expression refers to the hostility of some of his countrymen who followed him, and endeavoured to upset his work. If some bodily infirmity be meant there is much to show that it was probably some trouble of the

Various interpretations of "Skolops"

A probable one

eyes. We know from the accounts in the Acts that *after* seeing Jesus he became temporarily blind and was led by hand to Damascus, and it would seem as if some difficulty in his sight remained afterwards, for writing to Philemon he says: "I, Paul, have written it with my own hand"[1] as though there were some difficulty in the matter; but as it may be objected that this epistle is not accepted by many of the higher critics we will refer to another passage: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of, for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."[2] Clearly at this time he is suffering from some eye trouble and he refers to this as "an infirmity of the flesh". It may be "the sting of the flesh" to which he makes reference elsewhere, but in any case it is an infirmity which would appear to have attacked him after his seeing the risen Christ. But there is one point which has been overlooked. Paul says that this "sting of the flesh" was given to him as a preservative against spiritual pride on account of the

[1] Verse 19. [2] Galat. iv. 13-15.

visions and revelations that had been made to him, and he clearly refers to the passage we have already quoted wherein he tells us that he had been carried up to the third heaven, for he there says that he will not glorify himself on that account. He leads us to infer that this "sting of the flesh" was an affliction that had been given to him after these wonderful visions, and therefore after his conversion to Christianity. If then we are to read epilepsy into the matter, we are justified in concluding that he was not an epileptic at the time of his seeing Jesus risen from the dead, and consequently to argue that this experience was due to an epileptically diseased mind is ridiculous. But let us see what is the meaning of the original Greek and whether the same term has been used before in Scripture and with what meaning. "Καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθε μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος Σατᾶν ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι."[1]

When and why it was given him

The word Σκόλοψ in the margin refers to Numbers xxxiii. 55, where in the Vulgate we read "erunt vobis quasi *clavi* in oculis" which is translated in the Douay Version "shall be unto you as nails in your eyes and spears in your sides," or according to the Authorised Version "shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides". Again the same word Σκόλοψ is found in Ezechiel xxviii. 24, where we

"Skolops" found elsewhere and its meaning

[1] Text. recept., Scrivener.

read in the Vulgate "spina dolorem inferens" which Douay Version translates, "a thorn causing pain," and the Authorised Version renders "a pricking brier". Other references to the use of the same word are to be found in Job ii. 6, 7 and Luke xiii. 16. Liddell and Scott define Σκόλοψ, "a pale, a stake, a thorn". What evidence is there here to point to epilepsy? Absolutely none. Gould (iii., 43), referring to this matter, says that it meant "perhaps acute spasms of the heart, or epileptic convulsions". There is not the slightest iota of evidence in favour of either supposition. Lastly, let us look at the objection which has been raised to the story of his conversion as given in the Acts of the Apostles. This work was at a very early period in common circulation and the evidence in favour of the authorship of Luke is exceedingly strong. Here I am not going into that question. Paul himself refers, as we have seen, to the well-known fact of his conversion, and he tells us that he went at once into Arabia from Damascus, in or near which city he implies that his conversion took place. In the ninth chapter of the Acts we read:[1] "And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest. And asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues; that if he found any men and women of

Objection taken from the narratives of conversion concerning his companions

[1] Verses 1-9.

this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus: and suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him. And falling on the ground he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he said: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he trembling and astonished said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him: Arise and go into the city and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. *Now the men who went in company with him, stood amazed,* HEARING INDEED A VOICE BUT SEEING NO MAN. And Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they, leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink."

Now let us turn to the twenty-second chapter where Paul is speaking to the people. He relates his *rôle* of persecutor and his mission to Damascus and the appearance of Christ in the same way as is recorded in the ninth chapter, but in verse 9 we read: "*And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke unto me*". Here, we are told, is a direct

contradiction to the former narrative as regards those who were with Paul at the time, and so the whole story is negatived and rendered untrustworthy. Let us see. In the ninth chapter we are told that the companions of Paul heard a voice but saw nobody—in the twenty-second that they heard not the voice but saw the light. Now in the former they saw nobody, in the latter they saw a light. Surely a light is not a person. They may have seen a light and yet have seen nobody. There is no contradiction here. But in the former they heard a voice, and in the latter they heard not the voice of Him who spake. Here surely is a contradiction. The word translated "voice" means indeed a voice, or a sound, so that in the ninth chapter we read that they heard a sound or a voice merely; and in the twenty-second chapter we read that they did not hear that sound or voice in such way as to understand what was being said; and this interpretation is borne out by the words that follow "they heard not the voice" of *Him that was speaking.* Clearly it means that though hearing a voice they did not distinguish what was being said, just as one may hear indistinctly the sound of a human voice in a room which has its doors closed upon us, but be unable to know what is being said. Surely there is no difficulty and yet much has been made of it. And now, having

considered the whole of Paul's evidence, we have in it a most valuable witness to the Resurrection in the person of one who had had every facility for complete knowledge and who himself declares that he had seen the risen Christ. As has been concisely said: "We have evidence then of the Faith in the Resurrection at four distinct dates at least, namely A.D. 57, the approximate date of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle of the Corinthians; A.D. 51, the approximate date of the visit of St. Paul to Corinth when he taught them the Gospel of the Resurrection, to which he refers in his Epistle; A.D. 47 or 44, the date referred to in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians; and A.D. 35 or 33 the date referred to in the first chapter. If, as is practically certain, the death of Christ on the Cross took place in A.D. 29 or 30 (which no one doubts except those very few persons who doubt the existence of Christ altogether) we have evidence that within at the most twenty-eight years, and at the least four years, the Resurrection belief had grown up."[1]

Summing up of Paul's position and evidence

III. Synoptics and Fourth Gospel

We now pass on to a consideration of the evidence which is to be obtained from the Synoptic Gospels and that according to John. Once again

The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel

[1] Hon. and Rev. J. G. Adderley, *Evidence for the Resurrection;* MacMillan, *The Religious Doubts of Democracy.*

let the reader distinctly understand our position. We are considering the Scriptural writings as historical documents and not as inspired works. They contain many things which are hard to understand, many mysteries which are beyond the reach of human reason, because they deal with the Infinite and His Revelation. St. Augustine has well said, "Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi ecclesiæ Catholicæ me commoveret auctoritas".[1] And Professor Huxley has, as we have seen at an earlier period,[2] corroborated this famous dictum. The whole value of Scripture is based upon the authority of the Christian Church that declared it to be Scripture. Its meaning is for her to define in accordance with the deposit of Faith left her by her Founder. During the long course of centuries which have elapsed since first she put her seal upon these writings, errors by copyists, omissions, interpolations, unauthorised additions and mistakes may have crept into various editions of them and the same Church which gave the writings to us may sooner or later be called upon to examine the present copies and pronounce upon them. She has guarded the Scriptures zealously and has refused to give her sanction to such translations as were undertaken without her leave. That no vital error has found its way into her approved

Position and value of these works

St. Augustine's views

Professor Huxley's

[1] *Contra epistolam Manichæi*, cap. v. [2] Page 2.

text she gives us her guarantee, but she gives us none as to the possibilities I have named. Let me exemplify my meaning. The last twelve verses of the last chapter in Mark's Gospel are very generally held to be a subsequent addition to the original, and we find discrepancies in numerical quotations in the Old Testament. In the accounts given us by the synoptics one omits the genealogies, and in those of the Passion and Resurrection all do not relate the same incidents and some of the accounts cannot be clearly harmonised. Yet on all the main facts they are in unison. Take the accounts of the Passion and Resurrection for example. The hour of the Crucifixion is differently stated—the visits to the empty tomb appear confusing—the order of the appearances of the risen Christ seems to differ—but all agree that Jesus died upon the Cross, that the tomb was empty, that Jesus rose again and was seen of many. In a court of justice we look for agreement on essential points and we expect minor differences in the evidence. Where a group of witnesses gives exactly the same testimony in every detail we rightly suspect collusion and infer falsehood. And the same rules must be applied to the Scriptural witnesses of the Resurrection. Yet Strauss objected to the historicity of this fact because of the discrepancies in the testimony. Had these writings been the invention of a craftily

Examples of addition and omission

Gospels in harmony on all main points

Minor discrepancies in evidence of no value

formed story, these discrepancies would never have occurred. The very fact of the difficulties on minor points is one of our best guarantees against fraud. And it is neither judicial nor reasonable to disbelieve the story they lay before us merely because they are alleged to be not in absolute agreement on every point. Paley has given some useful illustrations in this matter. "The embassy of the Jews to deprecate the execution of Claudius's order to place his statue on their temple, Philo places in harvest, Josephus in seed-time: both contemporary writers." And yet the embassy was truly sent and the order truly given. He then quotes the case of the execution of the Marquis of Argyle. Lord Clarendon relates that he was condemned to be hanged and was executed on the day of his condemnation. On the other hand Burnet, Woodrow, Heath and Echard concur in stating that Argyle was beheaded, not on the Saturday of his condemnation but on the following Monday. Yet Argyle *was* sentenced to death and was put to death as nobody doubts.[1] "When," says Lessing, "Livy, Polybius and Tacitus describe the same event with such diversities as to contradict each other, has the event itself, in which they all agree, ever been denied?"

Illustrations from Paley

and from Lessing

It is not for me here to discuss the genuine-

[1] *Paley's Evidences*, Edn. S.P.C.R., 1872, p. 544.

ness and authenticity of the various writings in the New Testament. That will be done elsewhere. A great discussion is going on upon these points, and one would believe in reading the criticisms of certain learned writers of the past and present century, that these works had never before been subjected to criticism. Such, however, is not the case. From the time of Papias (died A.D. 160) down to that of Anselm (born A.D. 1033) we find a great deal of very earnest critical work. A second period commenced with Anselm and carries us down to the discussion of the problem of Universals. In it arose the scholastic school of philosophy which we find engaged in constructive and critical work. It issued in a definite systematic form of Philosophy and carries us down to the times of its greatest exponent, Thomas of Aquin (born A.D. 1227). Then came the period in which the discussion of subtle and useless subjects led to the decay of scholasticism. It was followed by the Renaissance with its devotion to *belles lettres* and the fine arts, and the neglect of criticism, till the last century saw the revival of a purely critical philosophy, and the study of historical criticism as a special department of it. To a very large extent the critical objections that are offered to-day against Christianity are old as Celsus from whom indeed many of them are taken. As we have said, it is

We are here not concerned with genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings

Higher criticism not a new thing

The dates of these writings are of great importance

no part of our duty to enter into a minute discussion of the New Testament writings, but it is necessary that we have some approximate idea of the date when each of the Gospels was written and in circulation, as a large part of their value as historical evidence depends upon it. Men have not been found wanting who have declared that the New Testament writings are a fraud. Rousseau replies: "My friend, forgeries are not of this kind, and the acts of Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as the acts of Christ. Besides, this only increases the difficulty. Far more inconceivable is it that several men should have combined to fabricate this book than that there should have been one living original whom they described. No Jewish author could have fabricated the tone or the moral teaching of the evangelist. So powerful, so overwhelming and inimitable is the impress of truth stamped upon the Gospel, that its inventor would be a greater marvel than its hero."[1] As Keim has said, "No sane person has ever supposed the Gospels to be based solely on recent legends, or modern inventions".[2] If it were clearly established that Matthew and John wrote the Gospels which bear their names, their testimony would be that of eye-wit-

Objection: They are a fraud. Rousseau's reply

Keim's view

[1] Rousseau, *Emile*, iv.

[2] *Geschichte Jesu von Nazareth*, 1872, p. 140.

nesses and of greater value; but as this is under discussion we do not intend to insist upon it. And similarly Mark and Luke if authors of their imputed writings would be second-hand authorities of a value almost equal to those of first hand. Here again we do not insist upon the point. At the same time we cannot refrain from giving our readers some idea of the weight of evidence which can be adduced in favour of the very early character of the Synoptic Gospels, and of their having been written by the authors whose names they bear. Father Sydney Smith, S.J., in an article in the *Month* for June, 1889, entitled "Professor Huxley on the Resurrection" has stated a powerful and convincing argument. He says. "The Gospel of St. Luke is generally allowed to be the work of a single hand, to have reached us in the form in which it was written, and to be the latest of the Three Synoptics. If then we can assign a date to its composition, Professor Huxley ought to accept an earlier one for Matthew, and a considerably earlier one for Mark. M. Renan, as Professor Huxley now knows, considers 'that one thing at all events is beyond doubt, namely, that the author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts is a man who belonged to the second Apostolic generation,' and that the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, which is inseparable from the rest of the work, was written

certainly after the siege of Jerusalem, but not long after, 'so that according to this testimony, which has the value of testimony wrung from the enemy, the inferior limit of time for the three Synoptic Gospels is about A.D. 70, the date of the siege of Jerusalem. As we do not believe that the correspondence of a prophetic statement with the event is proof positive that the book in which the prediction is found was composed subsequent to the event, we see no objection to assigning a still earlier date than this of about A.D. 70. But for present purposes A.D. 70 is early enough. It shows that there is nothing to prevent us from drawing the inference naturally suggested by the character of the Evangelist's statements, that they obtained them from contemporary and well-informed witnesses.' And so says M. Reuss, one of the 'critics' whom Professor Huxley commends, about St. Luke. 'Luke was able in Palestine itself to receive direct communications from immediate witnesses.'[1] Were it possible to dwell longer on this point, the early date of St. Luke would be satisfactorily established from internal evidence furnished by the Acts, which every one acknowledges to be a subsequent composition by the author of the Third Gospel. Still the authority of MM. Reuss and Renan will be sufficient for most readers." But

[1] *Hist. Evangélique*, 1re partie, p. 88.

the approximate date of these writings is of the highest importance. Now Tatian (died A.D. 180), a native of Assyria and a friend of Justin Martyr, made a harmony of the four Gospels in A.D. 150, which proves that at that time they were generally accepted. As we have already pointed out, the author of *Supernatural Religion* in his attempt to show that the four Gospels were not commonly received at that early period wrote: "The *Diatessaron* seems never to have been seen for the simple reason that there was no such work". Yet a few years later an Arabic version was found in the Vatican Library by Father Ciasca. It is allowed to represent the original and is found to contain the four Gospels entirely, except the Genealogies. Clearly then in the year A.D. 150 these writings were well known and accepted as the authorised Scriptures. But in order to reach the stage of authority they must have been separated from the numerous apocryphal Gospels and this was a work of many years. We are thus thrown far back for their origin, and as it is allowed that they contain a common tradition which is based on writings that are earlier still, we are driven back to within a few years of the alleged Resurrection, and the value of these New Testament writings as historical evidence is greatly enhanced.

Evidence of Tatian's "Diatessaron"

Gould's view of the dates

Gould, a well-known writer for the Rationalists,[1] says of Matthew's Gospel: "no useful result is gained by attempts to find the exact date of this Gospel. Some critics even incline to place sections of it at a period subsequent to Luke. We may infer that, early in the second century, a collection of the memoranda of the life of Jesus took a form which did not differ much from the Matthew document as we now have it." In reference to Luke he says: "In this case again we find it advisable to refrain from useless conjecture at the date of the document, beyond the assumption that it appeared in the early years of the second century".[2] Speaking of Mark he says: "Disputing scholars have set the date down to 70 C.E., 100, 120, etc., all that we can justly conclude is that 'Mark' preceded 'Matthew' and 'Luke'. No violence is done to probability by accepting this early Synoptic as a product of the end of the first century".[3] With regard to the Fourth Gospel he says: "Cogent objections from the Rationalist side seem to establish the fact that the Gospel did not see the light until about the year 150 C.E".[4] "We must content ourselves with the provisional hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel may have appeared towards the close of Hadrian's reign."[5] Thus we have the

[1] *Concise Hist. of Religion*, vol. iii., p. 128.
[2] *Ib.* p. 131.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 121, 122.
[4] *Ib.* p. 188.
[5] *Ib.* p. 190. Hadrian died 138.

dates given by Gould as illustrative of the Rationalist position for Matthew early in the second century, for Mark the end of the first century, for Luke early in the second century, for John about A.D. 135. The more moderate critics give us A.D. 42 to 67 for Matthew's Aramaic original, and A.D. 67 to 80 for the Greek translation; A.D. 67 as the latest date for Mark; and A.D. 80 as the latest for Luke, whilst John is put down at A.D. 90 to 100.

Views of moderate critics

Let us, for the purpose of argument, take a mean position in the matter where eminent authorities differ, and say A.D. 90 for Matthew, A.D. 80 for Mark, A.D. 90 for Luke, and A.D. 110 for John.

As to the value of Mark's Gospel, which is the most ancient, Eusebius gives us the testimony of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who was martyred in Rome about A.D. 160 or 170. Papias says: "The presbyter John used to say: Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For, he neither heard the Lord, nor followed Him, but subsequently attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants (of his hearers), but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed

no error, as he wrote down some particulars, just as he recalled them to mind. For, he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statement in his account of them."[1]

The tradition

All the four Gospels have the common tradition of the Resurrection, which therefore dates back to a much earlier period than the earliest of these dates. The Crucifixion occurred A.D. 30, and Mark's Gospel was written, as we assume, A.D. 80, fifty years after the event. The common written tradition must then be a much earlier work, whilst the oral testimony on which it rests must carry us back to the alleged events themselves, which were matters of general knowledge. Hence again have we evidence of the reception of the Resurrection as a well-known fact at the time of its occurence, and also within a very few years of the event, when numerous people were living who were eye-witnesses to the Risen Christ, and at a time when it would have been very easy to disprove the truth of the assertion by any who had distinct evidence

No opposing tradition

to the contrary. Yet, no such opposing evidence is forthcoming. Paul's early testimony is thus corroborated, and we have a chain of testimony that is absolutely unique.

[1] Euseb., *H. E.*, iii., 39.

And now let us pass on to a consideration of the details of the Resurrection story, as given in the various Gospels. Baur wrote towards the end of his life: "An impenetrable mystery hangs over the time between the death and resurrection of Christ, and by a chain of facts, first violently broken, then miraculously renewed, we find ourselves on a totally new platform of the history".[1]

Baur's difficulty

Truly it is impenetrable to those who refuse to accept the most striking testimony which has ever been adduced in support of an historical fact.

In dealing with the death of Christ we left the body in the care of Joseph of Arimathea, and we must now pursue the course of events onwards.

Matthew tells us:[2] "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre".

Matthew's evidence as to burial

Mark says:[3] "And he (Joseph) bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the

Mark's evidence

[1] Cf. Engelhardt, Schenkel and Strauss, 1864, p. 85.
[2] Chap. xxvii. 59, 60, 61.
[3] Chap. xv. 46, 47.

sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid."

Luke's evidence

Luke's story runs thus :[1] "And he (Joseph) took it down and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in the stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how the body was laid. And they returned and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment."

John's evidence

What says John?[2] "He (Joseph) came therefore and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never yet man laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

Harmony of the four accounts

The accounts are in unison as to the burial by Joseph in a rock tomb. Matthew and Mark tell

[1] Chap. xxiii. 53-56. [2] Chap. xix. 38-41.

us that the two Marys were present, whilst Luke says the women from Galilee followed after, and John is silent on the point. There is no contradiction as to the presence of the women. All agree that the body was wrapped in linen. Matthew and Mark say nothing about embalmment, but do not contradict it. Luke says that the women returned, and prepared spices and ointments, whilst John says that Nicodemus brought a hundred pound weight of spices, and that the body was surrounded by the spices. The objections raised against the embalmment are mainly two; the enormous amount of spices brought by Nicodemus; and the statement that the women went away and prepared for the embalmment, although they had been present at the burial, and must therefore have known that the body was already embalmed.

Objections

We are told that this great quantity of spices was brought in order to throw dust in the eyes of the Jews, and make them believe that Jesus was dead, whereas he was really only in a swoon.

Amount of spices

But we have already proved to a demonstration that Jesus was really dead.

Then we are told that with such an extravagant amount of spices the body could not have been got into the tomb.

But the writer does not say that the whole of

it was used, and we must also remember that it was a rich man who bought it, one who would probably give a liberal order for all that was needed, and in such cases we know what is the custom even to-day: more is sent than is needed.

Why women prepare more spices

But is it not at all events strange that the women who went to the sepulchre should have gone back, and prepared more spices? Not at all: for the embalmment, though lavish, was a hurried and incomplete one, on account of the nearness of the Sabbath day. To touch a dead body on that day was to be defiled, and unable to enter the Temple.

But there is another consideration. The women might not have known of the extent to which the body was embalmed. Edersheim has given us an account of the Jewish mode of burial, which would quite explain this difficulty. He says that at the entrance to the interior of such a tomb, and within the rock, was a court nine feet square, where the last rites for the dead took place. There the embalmment was carried out. Women were not allowed inside this court, but stood at a distance away. They therefore could, at best, have had but an imperfect view of what was going on, and it is quite conceivable that they regarded the embalmment as incomplete. Hence they resolved to supplement it.

In passing, we would call attention to the fact that, in coming to embalm the body on Sunday morning, there was no doubt in their minds as to the death of Christ—no thought of a resurrection. And, moreover, the hurried visit of Peter and John on the same morning shows that they were surprised to hear that the body had gone; and consequently they too had no idea of a resurrection.

The custom was to roll a large stone, with a smaller one for support, to the mouth of the tomb, and it was here that the seal was placed. This securing of the tomb is only reported by Matthew, when he relates "the guard story".

Objection regarding the time when the women procured spices

Yet one more objection with regard to the embalmment. Mark tells us that, "when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome had brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him".[1]

Luke says that after the burial the women "returned and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment".[2]

So, says the critic, Mark makes the purchase after the Sabbath, and Luke before that day. But what is the fact? Mark does not say that the spices were bought after the Sabbath. He says that when the Sabbath was past, they had

[1] Chap. xvi. 1. [2] Chap. xxiii. 56.

already bought them, and thus he confirms Luke who tells us that they were prepared after the burial.

That the body was in tomb on Saturday morning is proved by the guards' story

And now we come to the Sunday morning, and the alleged empty tomb.

We have already referred to the presence of the guards, a circumstance to which witness is borne alike by Jew and Christian.

Clearly the body was there on Saturday morning, and had not been removed by the disciples on the Friday night. The object of the presence of the guards being to see that the body was not taken away, we may be sure that they inspected the contents of the tomb, before sealing the stone.

Gone on Sunday morning

The body was there, then, on Saturday morning, and it had disappeared on Sunday morning, although guarded all the time. And we know what the soldiers were told to say as an explanation of its disappearance. Nearly all the critics allow that the tomb was empty on Sunday morning.

Wolfenbüttel's suggestion

The author of the fragments of Wolfenbüttel says that the Disciples stole the body, but Strauss so completely demolished this hypothesis, that it has quite disappeared. Did they do so? Either they believed that Jesus would rise again, or they did not. In the former case there was no

Disproved

motive impelling them to interfere; in the latter

case, as we have shown, their frame of mind must have been such as to make them wholly uninterested in what became of the body. Moreover, they were in too great a fear of the authorities; and certainly the soldiers would never have dared to act in collusion with them.

No critic of any standing says that the Disciples were deliberate deceivers, and yet this they must have been, if they had stolen away the body, and then alleged the Resurrection.

And absolutely nobody alleges that Jesus Himself was a deceiver; and yet He must have been so, if, according to the swoon theory, He revived, and either appeared to His Disciples as risen from the dead, or caused them indirectly to believe in His Resurrection. Moreover, it is impossible, as Strauss says, that after all Jesus had suffered, He could appear within so short a time, and in such a state of mind and body, as to convince His followers that He had conquered death by resurrection. How could a man, half dead, he asks, produce such an impression?

Weizsäcker's objection

Weizsäcker (*Das Apostoliche Zeitalter*) maintains that the tomb was not empty, and gives as his reason, that Paul makes no reference to it. But Paul declares that the dead body was put into the tomb, and that it rose again alive, and that he saw it living.

Surely it is quibbling with words to say that Paul does not mention the empty tomb; for he tells us that the body was there at one moment of time, and was not there at another. What is that but the empty tomb?

The "third day"

A word, in passing, on the assertion that Christ rose upon the third day. We are told that it is shown to be merely hypothetical, because when Paul speaks of the Resurrection, he says that Jesus rose again the third day, "according to the Scriptures". It is hence inferred that the whole story is made up to fit in with preconceived ideas of what the Messiah should have done, as prophesied in the Old Testament.

"According to the Scriptures"

Great difficulties are built up on the addition to the alleged historical facts of the phrase "according to the Scriptures". But the position is quite clear. These writers composed their works some years after the events they narrate. Looking back upon them, as men versed in Scripture, they see what to them is the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, and hence, wisely, or unwisely, they add their comment to the recorded fact, by inserting, "according to the Scriptures". But this in no way destroys the value of the facts which they narrate. It gives us the means of judging what was running in their minds by way of comment on what had happened. And if, in such comment,

they draw wrong inferences, or misapply or misquote supposed prophecies, this does not affect the fact, but only the exegetical skill of the writers.

Hence, the expression "He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures," clearly means that in the writer's opinion, His rising on that day was a fulfilment of an ancient prophecy.

Moreover, the Disciples of Jesus would naturally refer after the Resurrection to the sayings of Jesus, which prophesied His death and Resurrection, and would then see the realisation of what, at the time, they had not understood. And He had foretold the third day as that on which He would rise again.

And the same line of argument is applicable to the entire class of difficulties based upon such expressions.

That Jesus did rise on the third day, is a common tradition.

Certainly the grave was found empty on that day, and if we are to trust the common tradition, backed up as it is by the New Testament writings, Christ did rise on Sunday morning; and, for this reason, as we have said, that day was chosen by the Christian Church, in the place of the Jewish Sabbath.

The Resurrection morning

And now we come to the morning of the Resurrection, and the accounts given us of what

occurred at the empty tomb. And first of all comes the difficulty that has been raised, as to the time when that visit was made. Luke tells us that *a* visit was made "on the first day of the week, very early in the morning". Matthew says that a visit took place at the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week. Mark narrates a visit when the Sabbath was past; very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, the sun being now risen. Certainly they are all in agreement.

And yet a well-known writer seeks to make it appear that Matthew places his visit on Saturday evening, because he says that it occurred "at the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week". But Matthew apparently means merely to say that the Sabbath was over, and that the natural dawn of another day was making its appearance—that is to say, that it was early on Sunday morning.

But now comes John, with, as we are told, quite a different statement as to time.

He narrates a visit on the first day of the week early in the morning, "when it was yet dark". Luke says "very early in the morning". It might then have been still dark, according to his version. Matthew says "when it began to dawn". There was at least some light, according to him; and it

was not quite dark. Mark, however, says that it was "very early in the morning, the sun being now risen". It was then certainly not dark, though, the expression, "the sun being now risen," may readily infer dawn, and not full daylight.

We have then three different accounts of the time, night, dawn, and either dawn or full daylight.

If the writers are all referring to one and the same visit, clearly there is here a contradiction.

But, *are* they?

John, who says that it was dark, is referring to a visit made by Mary Magdalene *alone*.

She had loved her Lord very dearly, and we can readily understand that she was there, at the tomb, first of all, and well before all others. The narratives of the other three writers are not referring to this visit at all, but to subsequent ones made at later intervals, one early in the morning, another at dawn (and these two may have been the same) and a visit at full day-break. There is therefore no contradiction involved in these narratives.

The persons who made the visits

Luke tells us that the very early visit was made by Mary Magdalene. He thus makes her appear again on the scene; and in company with her, are the women who came with Jesus from Galilee, Mary the Mother of James, Johanna, and the other women who were with them. Matthew

mentions Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as coming to the tomb, but does not exclude other women.

Mark, whose time is practically identical with that of the other two Apostles, mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, and again he also does not exclude other women. Mary Magdalene apparently joined these various companies as they arrived.

There is then no contradiction among the three synoptic writers, as to the persons who made the visit, even if it were one and the same visit; whilst it is quite conceivable that these three accounts may refer not to one visit, but to two or even more, in all of which Mary Magdalene took part. And we remember that the Sepulchre was only outside the city walls. The women were most probably not lodged altogether at the same house, and may have left the city by different gates to make their visit. Thus as Father Coleridge points out in his *Life of Our Life*, there may have been different companies who issued from various gates much about the same early hour in the morning.

Now, what did they see?

What was seen

According to John, Mary Magdalene at her solitary visit found the stone rolled back, and at once hurried away to tell Peter and John, saying to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of

the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him".

Luke tells us that on the occasion of the visit made by the women, the stone was found rolled back. Mark is in agreement with him.

Thus, at the visit made subsequently to the solitary one of Mary Magdalene, the stone is found removed. Evidently it had been so removed before daybreak, for John's account tells us so, and these two synoptics in no way contradict that statement. But now we come to Matthew.

According to him, it was dawn, and the women came to the tomb. Instead of merely narrating, as did the others, that the stone was rolled back, he proceeds at once to explain how that occurrence took place. At first sight we might infer that he means to say that this removal of the stone took place in presence of the women, and consequently that the mouth of the tomb was secured by the stone at the time of their arrival; in which case, he would be in direct opposition to the other three evangelists. But such is not the case. He does not say that the earthquake took place at the moment of the arrival of the women, but is stating what had occurred to alarm the guard, and to account for their visit to the Jewish authorities. And into the midst of this divided account he inserts the visit by the women. The

four narratives are thus in harmony on the point.

The angels at the tomb

Let us now see what is to be said as to the angelic visions at the sepulchre.

We are told that these stories remove the whole matter out of the domain of history, and make it apocryphal and legendary. This is mere assumption. Certainly to one who believes neither in God nor in the soul, angels must be legendary, and before discussing the matter with such a person, we should have to demonstrate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. It would also be necessary to discuss the value of human testimony, and the historicity of other angelic appearances. We must refer such objectors to the other volumes in this series which deal with these subjects. But to those who allow the existence of God, and are willing to allow that unusual phenomena may occur in the realm of nature, and that man is capable of giving correct testimony to that which he observes as falling under the evidence of his senses, the allegation that beings of another order than our own, appeared, is not in itself incredible.

If we have unquestionable evidence for such appearances, we have no more right to deny it, than we have to deny the evidence of our senses

in every day matters of fact, observed in the same manner. But let us hear what is alleged to have been seen. Matthew says that an angel descended from heaven, and after rolling back the stone, sat upon it. "And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." The women, we are told, saw and conversed with him. This must have been in the inner court of the tomb, as the stone was placed at the entrance to the tomb itself. Hence the women were within the tomb enclosure, but only entered the sepulchre itself later on, at the invitation of the angel.

Mark says of his visit, that when the women saw the stone rolled away, they entered into the sepulchre, and saw "a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," who invited them to look into the sepulchre.

This is in harmony with Matthew. It merely adds at what side of the stone which was in the enclosure and not in the tomb itself, the angel was sitting. Clearly Matthew and Mark's visits are one and the same, at the rising of the sun.

Luke relates a visit by women, and he tells us what they saw.

"They entered into the sepulchre, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining gar-

ments." The women were inside the sepulchre itself, and the angel who had appeared to the other women in the court, was no longer visible. These two angels were then inside, not outside the tomb. There is here no contradiction of the reports given by Matthew and Mark, for Luke's visit is not the same, and the circumstances are different. And now for John's account.

Mary Magdalene at her solitary visit, sees the stone rolled back, but no angel, and without waiting she hurries to Peter and John. Hers is the first visit. Yet the narrative of Matthew tells us that it was an angel who rolled back the stone, and sat upon it; and that he was seen there on the occasion of a subsequent visit. Objectors conclude that he ought to have been there when Mary made the first visit. Why? It does not follow as a necessity. He may have removed the stone, and have been seen by the guards, who narrated the circumstance afterwards, and yet he may surely have disappeared after that event, to manifest himself not to Mary Magdalene but later to the group of women. When Peter and John returned with Mary, they entered the empty tomb, took note of the position of the graveclothes, and yet saw no angels, although on entering later the women are said to have seen two angels standing erect. Quite so; but the visits were made at

different times, and there is nothing to lead us to believe that the angels remained visible the whole time.

Objection: Angels visible and invisible; sitting and yet standing; one and yet two

But surely when Mary Magdalene looked into the sepulchre, after the departure of Peter and John, she saw two angels sitting, one at the head, and the other at the foot of where Jesus had lain, and they spoke to her. How comes it then that the Apostles did not see them? And how comes it that they were sitting, whereas the women saw angels standing? The angels were not always visible; they did not manifest their presence the whole time, and to everybody who came; neither does it follow that it was the same angels who manifested their presence to Mary, and to the other women; hence, there is no contradiction involved in some being found standing, some sitting, some visible at one time, some at another. If Christ were God, we may readily understand that countless spirits filled that tomb, though unseen by mortal eyes. There is then no ground for the objections that have been made against what are called "the angel stories," because some see one angel, some two; some see an angel sitting, others see angels standing, and yet others see none at all. The occasions are different, and the groups of visitors are different. But Mary

Magdalene figures in all, or nearly all these accounts. What is more likely than that she should be found in constant watch at the spot so dear to her?

The angelic messages

And now let us see what are the difficulties which have been brought forward with regard to the messages given by the angels to the women.

In Matthew we read,[1] "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead: and behold He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him: lo! I have told you."

Mark tells us that the angel said, "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified: He is risen: He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you."

These two accounts are in unison.

Now what says Luke? To his party of women who were probably different from that of Matthew and Mark, two angels give the following

[1] Chap. xxviii. 5-7.

message, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you, when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

There is no mention of any message to the Apostles, nor of any visit to Galilee. But is there any necessity why the same identical message should be given at different visits? To Mary Magdalene the angels merely said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Here again the occasion is a different one, and we have thus three messages, but no contradiction is involved in the matter.

The appearances of Christ

And now we come to the appearances of the risen Jesus on that memorable Sunday.

That there could have been no anticipation of the Resurrection on the part of the Apostles we have already seen. Their very refusal to believe the story of the women that they had seen Jesus alive,—their refusal to obey the order to go into Galilee—their astonishment and fright on themselves seeing their risen Master—all alike prove that His Resurrection was unexpected; and the very ingenuousness of the narratives removes all suspicion that their refusal to believe was merely a device, as some have alleged; there is not the slightest tittle of evidence to support such an idea.

Now let us look at the various accounts; and we will begin with Matthew.[1] "And as they, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, went to tell his Disciples (that they had seen the empty tomb, and an angel) behold Jesus met them saying, All hail! And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go, tell My brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." The author of *Supernatural Religion* says: "What was the use of the angel's message, since Jesus Himself immediately after appears, and delivers the very same instruction in person? This sudden, and apparently unnecessary appearance has all the character of an after-thought. One point is very clear; that the order to go into Galilee, and the statement that there first Jesus is to appear to the Disciples is unmistakable, repeated, and peremptory."[2] A servant may be given a message from his master, but if the person to whom such message is sent, meets that master, what is more natural than that the master should refer to the message he has sent?

Certainly the appearance is sudden, but such were most of those that are recorded; unnatural it certainly was not, save to those who declare the Resurrection to be an impossibility.

The order to go into Galilee is indeed definite,

[1] Chap. xxviii., 9, 10, 16-20. [2] P. 831.

but as we have already said, it was disobeyed because the disciples did not believe the women's story. Later on, in the same chapter[1] we read, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted."

Visit to Galilee not immediately after Resurrection

The particle "then," does not here mean, "immediately after the women's message". It should be rendered by the word, "subsequently," for that is its undoubted meaning; and hence the appearances in Jerusalem are neither an after-thought, nor an impossibility. Moreover, the peremptory order was finally obeyed.

We cannot too often point out that the Gospels are not, and do not profess to be chronological records. They are mere memoirs of the Apostles.

Some *doubted*

But, we are told, that "When they saw him, they worshipped *but some doubted*". Surely this is a proof that there were good grounds for denying the reality of the Resurrection, since some of the very eleven doubted. But that is not what the text declares. It says of the eleven, "they" worshipped Him. Now they would not have worshipped Him had they doubted, and hence the word "some" cannot refer to the Apostles. Moreover,

[1] Verses 16-17.

the expression "some" clearly refers to others who were present; for, if it had referred to the Disciples, it would have read "but some *of them*," doubted. It may however be objected, "At all events, some of those who were present on that occasion, did doubt". True. But was there ever any great event, about which some have not doubted, even when the evidence was of the strongest? Some men doubt the reality of their own existence. Of those who were present, some may not have known the person of Jesus before His death, and thus have doubted whether so truly real and living a person could ever have hung dead upon the cross.

And now let us turn to Mark.

In verse seven of the last chapter, we are told that Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, after receiving their message for the Disciples, fled from the sepulchre, "neither said they anything to any man for they were afraid". Matthew does not report the delivery of the message, but implies it, for he refers to the "going" of the women, apparently for that purpose. Luke in his report of the visit made by his group of women,—which, let us remember, was probably not the same group as that of Mark,—says nothing of any message given to them; and John gives quite a different message, but it is to Mary

Magdalene alone on the occasion of her solitary visit to the tomb before daybreak.

Much has been made of all this, as if a contradiction were involved; but there is none; and as for the women saying nothing, it clearly means that they said nothing to anybody on their way to the Disciples.

The last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel

And now we come to the last twelve verses of the last chapter of Mark's Gospel. Clearly they form an appendix to that Gospel, which ends abruptly at the eighth verse. Possibly a portion of the original Gospel has been lost, and the addition has been made by another writer, whose record is in harmony with John. This portion is certainly of apostolic date, if not from the pen of Mark himself, which is not improbable. It records for us the appearance first of all to Mary Magdalene, whose report to the Apostles is disbelieved. It then refers to the Emmaus incident, and the repeated disbelief of the disciples. And last of the appearances, it records that to the eleven. We then have a speech from Jesus; and the record concludes by saying: "So then after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into Heaven,"[1] and critics have argued from this that the Ascension is affirmed to have taken place immediately

[1] Verse 19.

after this appearance. Again we have to insist upon the fact that these records are not chronological, and that such an expression as, "after the Lord had spoken to them," does not mean, "immediately afterwards". Luke records at length the appearance of Jesus to the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus.[1] Objections are urged against the probability of this story. Let us consider them. Jesus—who is evidently known to the travellers, say the objectors, since they recognised him later—approaches them as they are on their way, and holds a long conversation with them. "Yet, they do not know Him!" We are told that "their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him".[2] We are dealing with a material body, it is true, but with a spiritualised one, that is to say, with a body to which has been superadded powers not ordinarily and naturally belonging to it. Hence there is nothing astonishing in the risen Jesus making use of some of those powers, at one moment to hide His identity, at another to pass rapidly from place to place; at one moment to appear, and then to disappear quite suddenly; at another to pass through matter ordinarily impermeable to the human frame. It is not impossible for one material body in nature to permeate another. Radium can pierce through wood,

The Emmaus incident

Sudden appearances and disappearances, and passage through matter

[1] Chap. xxiv. [2] Verse 16.

and the sun's rays through the ether. The particles of a body are not so welded together that no space exists between them. They are more or less closely set together, but they are not physically united into one indivisible whole. It is then conceivable that matter, under certain conditions, may pass through other matter, and what do we know of the capabilities of a human body under abnormal conditions, which shall warrant us in saying that it must be unable to change its form, or to pass through and among the particles of another material body? Because we have no experience of a thing, we are not thereby justified in denying its possibility. Radium is old as the universe, yet it was unknown until quite recent years, and it is radically changing our ideas of the nature and capabilities of matter. We know that the ether exists, but who has seen or handled it? And who amongst us has seen a risen body, that he should be able to say of it, that it cannot assume forms that shall make it unrecognisable, or capable of acts such as are impossible to it whilst in the natural state? So was it that Jesus in His risen body was at one time unrecognised and at another clearly known. So was it also that He vanished suddenly from their sight. Luke tells us that these two Disciples returned to the eleven and related what had occurred, and that on their return

they were told how Jesus had appeared to Peter.

Objection

"Thomas was absent, according to John, hence there were only ten present, and not eleven." It is not stated here that the eleven were present, but only that the two Disciples returned to "the eleven," that is to say, to the Apostles. Thomas may have been present when the two Disciples left for Emmaus, and have gone out of the chamber before their return. And the writer, being more occupied with the idea of Christ's appearance than with the number present, mentions the return as being made to "the eleven," speaking in a general and quite natural manner.

Whilst yet they spoke of these things, He stood in their midst, and they were terrified, for they thought they saw a spirit. And He showed them His hands and feet with the print of the nails, and bade them touch Him; and, to convince them that He was in the very body that hung upon the cross, He ate with them. Here our critics carp again, saying, How could a spirit eat? He was not a pure spirit but a human being, composed of body and soul, even though that body had been endowed with new and wonderful properties.

A spirit eating!

Speeches differ in Mark and Luke

But we are told that His speech on this occasion is not the same as that given by Mark. There is no contradiction between the two. Each

writer is recording, not the whole of the speech, but extracts from it. Luke then gives an account of the Ascension, and it is urged that he thus confirms Mark in making that event follow on immediately after this appearance, and thus excludes all other alleged appearances in Galilee. We have already answered that objection, in dealing with Mark's account. It is well here to note that in the Acts of the Apostles, which is by the same author as the third Gospel, we are told of the forty days' interval.

Mary Magdalene does not know Jesus at first appearance

And last of all we come to the Fourth Gospel, where we read[1] the history of Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene, when it was yet dark, on that Sunday morning. And here we are confronted with the astonished ejaculation, "What! not know Jesus after two days' separation!" This objection ignores entirely the properties of the risen body, its powers of change in appearance, its rapidity of movement, and its capability of passage through matter. But let us answer the objection as though such capabilities did not exist. Mary is weeping, and her mind is full of perplexity. She turns away from the tomb, which was illuminated by the angelic light, and in the comparative gloom outside she sees a human form. One thought is uppermost in her mind, where have they laid Him? She

[1] Chap. xx. 14-17.

never dreams that He has risen again. And the angels have told her nothing. Can we then wonder, under all these circumstances, that she distinguishes not His features? But when she hears the well-known voice say: "Mary!" she knows it is not the gardener, but the One she loves so well. "According to John He bids her touch him not, whilst in Matthew, the pious women are permitted to lay hold of His feet." The occasions are different, and there may have been a reason why Jesus wished Mary Magdalene not to touch Him on that first occasion. But, we are told, Christ gives as His reason, "for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but, go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God". This reference, say the critics, is to the ascension, and, consequently, that event took place, if it ever occurred, immediately after the alleged resurrection. Consequently there is a contradiction when the other synoptics place it in Galilee, and long afterwards. But does the passage imply that such ascension took place after Mary's interview? In the first place let us consider what Christ meant by the expression, "Touch Me not". The Greek word for "touch" is imperfectly translated. The original verb, ἅπτου which is in the middle voice implies more than mere contact; it means, "to lay eager hold upon a thing".

Touch Me not

Now, here is the explanation of the Saviour's meaning. "Do not be in such a hurry to lay hold of Me, as though you should never see Me again, because My Ascension is not yet. There is still time. I shall be with you again. But go and tell My Disciples that I have arisen, and that I shall ascend to heaven." (Compare, "The Son of man *goeth* up, but woe," etc.) There is thus no contradiction between this passage and that in Matthew, where we are told that a little while later the risen Jesus permits Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James to lay hold of His feet. In all probability, in the account given by John, Mary had already laid hold of Jesus, and it was her eager clinging that drew the remark from the risen Christ. Thus, Mary was permitted to touch the Saviour at that famous interview, just as much as at a later period, when she and Mary the mother of James did the same.

And then John relates the appearance to the eleven, as has been done by others, and again, from the discourse that was made, John chooses those portions which are most useful for his purpose. There is nothing contradictory with what is given in the other speeches, but merely supplementary.

But we are told that the author of the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus show His hands and side,

Difficulty about Jesus showing hands and feet

instead of His hands and feet as related by Luke. He may, and probably did show His hands, and feet, and side, but John mentions especially the side, because he has made a particular point of that in his account of the crucifixion. Luke does not exclude the side, nor does John exclude the feet. Where then is the difficulty?

Difficulty about giving of Holy Ghost

But it is again objected that, according to John, the Holy Ghost was given by the risen Jesus at this interview, and not, as according to Acts, at Pentecost. The circumstances are wholly different. At this Sunday reunion, Christ gives them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, for the special purpose of remission of sins, as at an earlier period He had given them the power of celebrating the Sacred Mysteries. At Pentecost He gives them the plenitude of His power, and establishes the Church. The Holy Spirit descends then to confirm them, and give them *all* that was needed to strengthen and make them perfect Christians. And Luke bears out this idea when he says in his last chapter,[1] "And behold, I send you the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high".

John then goes on to narrate the appearance of

[1] Verse 49.

Christ eight days later, when Thomas, who had been absent upon the first occasion, was present. Jesus stoops to the unbelief of Thomas, and bids him put his finger into the holes made by the nails, and his hand into the opening in the side. Incidentally this corroborates the depth of the wound made by the spear, and shows us that it was no mere skin deep incision, as alleged by some of the hostile critics. John next passes on to narrate one of the appearances of Christ to His Disciples in Galilee, thus showing us that the order of Jesus given alike by Himself and the angels, was carried out at the last. And the witnesses of this particular appearance are Peter and John, Thomas called Didymus, Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and another Disciple, for John must be counted as one of the "two other Disciples" named by the Evangelist. Again the risen Christ eats with them. And the author of the Fourth Gospel tells us: "This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His Disciples, after that He was risen from the dead".[1] The other two occasions were on Easter Day, and on its octave, as we have seen. And here we should like to say a few words about the view generally held by Spiritists with regard to the Resurrection and subsequent appearances of Christ. According

Appearance to the eleven, including Thomas

Spiritists and the Resurrection

[1] Chap. xxi. 14.

to them, these events form one of a series amongst countless resurrections and apparitions of persons departed from this world. They excel the latter however in the supreme nobility of the life and character of Jesus, and in His superior mediumship; whereby He was able to do marvels that transcend many of those worked to-day in spiritistic circles.

But Spiritism was known at the time of Christ, and had been known for many hundreds of years; and manifestations had been at least as frequent as they are to-day.

Yet the apparition of the risen Christ made a sensation without parallel. We leave aside the argument derived from the empty tomb. What then was it that made so great a difference between the spirit manifestations and materialisations of that day, and the manifestation in matter of the Crucified One? Clearly, something that transcended the former, and was without an equal in it. The whole cause of that difference lies in the fact that Christ raised again to life the dead body that was in the tomb, and in that body appeared again to His Disciples. He did not make use of other media, or of extraneous matter, wherewith to fashion for Himself a materialisation. He reanimated His own corpse to permanent and deathless life. This is what the Resurrection

meant—this is what was asserted—this is what the Christian Church bears witness to, even this very day. This has, we think, never been claimed as a power in Spiritism, and yet this is what is alleged to have happened in the case of Jesus. His Resurrection and subsequent appearances are therefore placed on a totally different level from those occurring in spiritistic phenomena.

Resurrection in moral power

To say, as some writers do, that Jesus only rose in power, that His life and character vindicated themselves after His death, and so gave to Him a moral resurrection, is to miss the whole meaning of Christianity. Many great and good men rise in this manner every day, and as well might we say that Shakespeare or Julius Cæsar rose from the dead, because their works have made them famous and rescued them from the oblivion that overtakes the vast mass of human kind. Such a resurrection is no resurrection at all, and it is mere playing with the word, when it is used in any such sense.

If Christ's Resurrection were such, why should it have caused such astonishment at the time, or have worked such stupendous changes in the belief of the world?

If such had been the nature of Christ's Resurrection, then truly, as St. Paul has said, our faith were vain, for it would in no essential manner

differ from the influence exerted by the memories of the mighty dead, who, after all, are but human, whereas in the case of Christ, this stupendous miracle is the great proof of His Divinity.

John's testimony to nature of Gospels

To come back again for a few moments to St. John. He ends his memoirs by telling us, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

A clear proof that like the other Evangelists, John has only made a selection from amongst all he knew; and in no sense did he attempt to write all that Jesus said and did. A chief and fertile source of the objections made by the Agnostic and Rationalistic schools against the testimony and value of the New Testament, arises from forgetfulness of this very point. The accounts do not profess to be either chronological or complete. They are but memoirs written for those who already believe, and are in no sense given as a demonstration or a proof of that which they relate. And hence it is, as we have already said, that the events are recorded without comment or exclamation, though they relate strange and wonderful occurrences. They are a mere statement of certain facts, put into writing for the benefit—not of un-

believers—but of faithful Christians. If the objectors would but remember this fact, at least three-fourths of their difficulties would vanish.

Narratives alleged to be built on Psalms

It is objected, "The narratives of the Gospels, instead of being independent and genuine history, are constructed upon the lines of supposed Messianic Psalms". The facts are related by the writers, who have in their minds, what they regard as prophecies made either in the Old Testament, or by Christ Himself, before the events occurred. Looking back they see how the fact and the prophecy correspond, and hence, when they use such terms as, "according to the Scriptures," "as it was foretold" and so forth, they merely state that, whilst relating the fact, they wish to put on record how in their opinion it was the fulfilment of a previous prophecy. Their references and inferences *may* be wrong, but that does not invalidate the facts themselves. They do not build up these occurrences upon the prophecies but rather the prophecies upon the occurrences.

"The Acts" and the Resurrection

With one more quotation from the New Testament writings we shall content ourselves. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke again refers to the Resurrection, and to the subsequent appearances of Jesus, "To whom (the Apostles) also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible

proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God".[1] He would lead us to infer, and there is nothing in the Gospels against it, that Jesus may have been with His Apostles very frequently during these forty days, and have said many things, and given many instructions, that are not set down in writing.

And in this very quotation we have again proof of the selective character of the writings composing the New Testament.

Nature of testimony to Resurrection

We have then the testimony of the Gospels, written by eye-witnesses, or by those who were in communication with them, that Jesus appeared five times on Easter Sunday, and subsequently; testimony given at a time when many of the witnesses must have been alive; testimony, which, at that early date, was easy of confutation; and yet, not a single opponent comes forward in this matter of public knowledge seriously to dispute and disprove the fact. Some tried to explain it away, as in the witness of the "sleeping guards," but the attempt is ridiculous and self-confuting.

All these witnesses to the Risen Christ are men who had no end to serve, but rather all to lose by their story,—even reputation and friends, home and life itself. Yet unflinchingly they pro-

[1] Chap. i. 3.

claim the Resurrection and before God and man declare it a reality. Can testimony be stronger? And the author of the Acts of the Apostles, who was certainly also the writer of the Gospel according to Luke, corroborates all this when he tells us that Jesus "showed Himself alive after His Passion by many proofs, being seen of them for forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, you have heard from Me."[1] And again,[2] "But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and all Judæa and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth". But does not this command not to depart from Jerusalem until the plenitude of the Holy Ghost should be given them, make the appearances in Galilee impossible? Not at all. They are not to leave Jerusalem on their missionary work until after that event. And this command is given, not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee immediately before His Ascension into Heaven. They are to return to the Holy City and there wait for Pentecost.

Acts of the Apostles

Objection: Command not to depart from Jerusalem makes Galilean appearances impossible

A very plausible argument against the pro-

[1] Verses 3, 4. [2] Verse 8.

bability of the resurrection has been based upon the fact that Jesus manifested Himself to His friends and not to His enemies. "If," say they, "He had appeared before Pilate and the Sanhedrin, He would have convinced them of His Resurrection, and that He was the Master of life and death, and thus have established the truth of Christianity before the world. As it is, the resurrection is a hole and corner thing, only seen by those who were His friends." This is the argument also employed by Celsus centuries ago. We can give our answer in no better terms than those of the late Cardinal Newman. "This is the question, 'Why did not our Saviour show Himself after His resurrection to all the people? Why only to witnesses chosen before of God?' and this is my answer, 'Because this was the most effectual means of propagating His religion through the world'."[1] He goes on to say that if Jesus had made a public exhibition of His resurrection it might have made a passing sensation. "Had our Lord appeared in public, yet few could have touched Him, and certified themselves it was He Himself. Few, comparatively, in a great multitude, could so have seen Him both before and after His death, as to be adequate witnesses of the reality

Why did not Jesus appear to the Sanhedrin and Pilate?

Newman's reply

[1] Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Serm. xxiv. (Easter-tide), "Witnesses of the Resurrection," p. 196 ff.

of the miracle. It would have been open to the greater number of them still to deny that He *was* risen. This is the very feeling St. Matthew records. When He appeared on a mountain in Galilee to His Apostles and others, as it would seem (perhaps the five hundred brethren mentioned by St. Paul), '*some doubted*' whether it was He. How could it be otherwise? these had no means of ascertaining that they really saw *Him* who had been crucified, dead and buried. Others, admitting it was Jesus, would have denied that He had ever died. Not having seen Him dead upon the cross, they might have pretended He was taken down thence before life was extinct, and so restored. This supposition would have been a sufficient excuse to those who *wished* not to believe. And the more ignorant part would fancy they had seen a *spirit* without flesh and bones as man has. They would have resolved the miracle into a magical illusion, as the Pharisees had done before, when they ascribed His works to Beelzebub; and would have been rendered no better or more religious by the sight of Him than the common people are nowadays by tales of apparitions and witches. Surely so it would have been; the chief priests would not have been moved at all; and the populace, however they had been moved at the time, would not have been lastingly moved, not

practically moved, not so moved as to proclaim to the world what they had heard and seen, as to preach the Gospel. This is the point to be kept in view, and consider that the very reason *why* Christ showed Himself at all was in order to raise up *witnesses* to His resurrection, ministers of His Word, founders of His Church; and how in the nature of things could a populace ever become such?" "It is indeed a *general* characteristic of the course of His providence, to make the few the channels of His blessings to the many; but in the instance we are contemplating, a few were selected, because only a few *could* (humanly speaking) be made instruments. As I have already said, to be witnesses of His resurrection it was requisite to have known our Lord intimately before His death. This was the case with the Apostles; but this was not enough. It was necessary they should be certain it was He Himself, the very same whom they before knew. You recollect how He urged them to handle Him and be sure that they could testify to His rising again. This is intimated in the text also: 'Witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead'.[1] Nor were they required merely to know Him, but the thought of Him was to be stamped upon their

[1] Acts x. 40, 41.

minds as the one master-spring of their whole course of life for the future. But men are not easily wrought upon to be faithful advocates of any cause. Not only is the multitude fickle; but the best men, unless urged, tutored, disciplined to their work, give way; untrained nature has no principles. It would seem then that our Lord gave His attention to a few, because, if the few be gained, the many will follow." "It is plain every great change is effected by the few, not by the many; by the resolute, undaunted, zealous few."

The Galilean and Judæan traditions

And now we come to speak of what are called the Galilean and Judæan traditions. We have already seen why the Apostles did not obey the order at once. We know they did so later. Weizsäcker[1] maintains that the disciples went after the crucifixion to Galilee. There they had remarkable visions of the risen Christ,—they returned to Jerusalem and remained in secrecy for some considerable time, and thus the attention of the Sanhedrin was not called to them. Belief in the Resurrection was of slow growth and only became public after a very long interval. How it gained its hold of the people we do not know, but the lateness of the belief and the slow nature of the growth are the reason why the Jewish authorities did not demonstrate the alleged Resurrection to be a myth. Let us make

Weizsäcker's views

[1] *Das Apostolische Zeitalter.*

reply. All the accounts we have are unanimous in asserting that the Resurrection occurred on the third day, and that on that same day the Apostles and others saw the risen Jesus. Now it is questionable whether these men and women could have reached Galilee by Sunday, even had they made forced marches on the Sabbath day, which no good Jew would have done. And even had they then reached Galilee, how could any rumour of an alleged Resurrection on the Sunday have got to them? Only a telegram, or a telephonic message could possibly have reached them so soon, and neither existed. Yet we know that it was on the Easter Sunday that they did see and believe in the risen Christ. And it was too soon for any idle dreams or fancies about such a thing to have entered their minds whether in Galilee or Jerusalem. In the first place, as we have shown, no Jew could naturally have had the faintest idea of such an event. And the desolation of their souls, their depression and fear were the least likely factors to give rise to such happy thoughts or hallucinations, as those of a risen Christ. And unless these men were dishonest, even had all these ideas been possible, on their return they would naturally visit the tomb, and when all the zeal of the chief priests had passed away, they would have found the tomb

Apostles could not have reached Galilee in time

Yet appearances on third day

State of their mind against such happy illusions

still sealed. And had they dared, even at a later date to assert the Resurrection, the authorities would have pointed in triumph to the stone guarded sepulchre or even to the decaying body or the bleaching bones. And yet such was not done, although it was perfectly possible at any period during the life-time of these men. But the whole thesis is a baseless supposition and contrary to all known facts. And to those who object that the Scriptures said His first appearance should be in Galilee, we must answer that they have read wrongly the passages to which they refer. No such statement is made. Matthew and Mark give the angel's message to go into Galilee where He should be seen, but there is no mention that this was to be the first appearance, and Jesus is reported to have said: "Tell My brethren that they go into Galilee and there shall they see Me". Again no mention of its being the first appearance. They *did* go into Galilee afterwards, and they *did* meet Him there, and we have already seen why they did not obey the order to go at once. The Judæan and Galilean traditions are therefore perfectly compatible, when correctly understood. And now we come to the celebrated Vision Theory, which has been presented in many ways by various writers. Schmiedel reduced all the appearances to subjective illusion. Strauss

Sealed tomb and presence of body would have been against them

The Vision Theory. Schmiedel, Strauss, Pfleiderer

and Pfleiderer liken them to what they alleged to be the epileptic vision of Paul. With this latter we have already dealt. To put the idea of the Vision Theory generally, we may say that it means, that the Apostles dwelling with affection on the thought of Jesus, imagined that they saw him alive again. It is the chief theory of to-day, and is accepted by the Jews. But it is inconceivable on the known facts. Jesus died on Friday; on Sunday he was believed to have been seen alive. What time was there for such an idea to originate? There must moreover have been a mental preparation requiring some length of time for the Apostles and others to have evolved such a thought, and we have already seen that the state of their mind was the direct opposite of that required for such a bright and exulting thought. The statement that they did not remain in Jerusalem but went at once to Galilee, we have already shown to be contrary to fact. If they had been capable of these visions between the Friday and the Sunday, the sealed tomb, or the lifeless body in it, would have sobered them, and the ridicule of the people who could have pointed to both would have stamped them as lunatics. And the same holds good if we are to suppose that these visions occurred in Galilee, or at any subsequent time, even when mental preparations had been possible. "To carry through

No time for psychological preparation

Reply from Hastings' "Dict. of the Bible"

a consistent theory of visions two conditions are necessary. (*a*) If they arose, as Strauss supposes from affectionate dwelling upon the personality of Jesus, combined with reflection upon certain passages of the Old Testament[1] it follows almost of necessity, that we must also with Strauss throw over the tradition of 'the third day,' and regard the belief as the outcome of a somewhat prolonged process, a process spread over weeks and months rather than days. (*b*) On the other hand, if we must discard the tradition as to the beginning of the appearances, we must equally discard that as to their end. The wave of feverish enthusiasm to which, on this hypothesis, they owed their origin, certainly would not have subsided in the interval between Passover and Pentecost. We note, as it is, an ascending scale in the appearances—they occur first to individuals (Mary Magdalen, Peter, the Emmaus Disciples) then to the Ten and the Eleven, then to the Five Hundred. We can see how one appearance prepares the way for another. St. Peter, *e.g.*, must have been present at three or four. With this increasing weight of testimony, and increasing predisposition in the minds of the Disciples, we should naturally expect that the appearance to the Five Hundred would contain within itself the germs of an infinite series. We

An ascending scale of appearances then cease suddenly

[1] Psalms xvi. 10; Isaiah liii. 10-12.

should not have been surprised if the whole body alike of Christians and half Christians had caught the contagion. But that is not the case. There is just the single appearance to James; and then—the vision of St. Paul standing rather by itself—with one more appearance to the assembled Apostles and the list comes to what seems an abrupt end. This description of the facts rests on excellent evidence. The 'third day' is hardly less firmly rooted in the tradition of the Church than the Resurrection itself. We have it not only in the speech ascribed to St. Peter[1] but in the central testimony of St. Paul, and then in the oldest form of the Apostles' Creed. It is strange that so slight a detail should have been preserved at all, and still stranger that it should hold the place it does in the standard of the Church's faith. We must needs regard it as original. And for the circumscribed area of the appearances, we have at once the positive evidence of the canonical documents, and a remarkable silence upon the part of the extra-canonical. These phenomena are difficult to reconcile with a theory of purely subjective visions. An honest enquirer like Keim felt the difficulty so strongly, that, while regarding the appearances as essentially of the nature of visions, he held them to be not merely subjective, but

[1] Acts x. 40.

divinely caused, for the express purpose of creating the belief in which they issued. This is the least that must be asserted. A belief that has had such incalculably momentous results, must have had an adequate cause. No apparition, no mere hallucination of the senses ever yet moved the world. But we may doubt whether the theory, even as Keim presents it, is adequate or really called for. It belongs to the process of so trimming down the elements that we call supernatural in the Gospel narratives as to bring them within the limits of everyday experience. But that process, we must needs think, has failed. The facts are too obstinate, the evidence for them is too strong; and the measures which we apply are too narrow and bounded. It is better to keep substantially the form which a sound tradition has handed down to us even though its contents in some degree pass our comprehension."[1]

Keim's telegram from Heaven

Keim did not believe in the Resurrection or in any subjective visions on the part of the Disciples arising from mere pious thoughts or expectations, but said that Jesus communicated to the minds of His followers the firm belief that He was living with God in Heaven in a state of glory, and he has described this communication as "a telegram from

[1] Art. "Jesus Christ," pp. 641-42, Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible.*

Heaven". The visions which they had were subjective hallucinations due to this "telegram". He came to this belief in face of the fact that unless there were such intervention, Christianity could not have come into being, or survived the shameful death upon the Cross.[1] But this explanation is surely very far-fetched and groundless. It is indeed chimerical, and without any evidence in its support save the well-known high reputation of its author. Others object that Christ rose again indeed, but only in power, and not in the body.

Harnack

Dr. Harnack distinguishes between the "Easter Faith," *i.e.*, the belief that Jesus lives with God, and the "Easter Message," *i.e.*, the empty tomb

Pfleiderer

and the appearances of the risen Jesus. Pfleiderer writes: "The Resurrection of Christ has no longer for the religious intelligence the significance of a merely single individual and external event, but becomes the beginning of a continuous creative process in the Community, and of the working of that life-giving principle which the Community has in common with Christ".[2] These attempts at explaining the Resurrection as a mere effect upon the mind of the Disciples and their followers, are at variance with the known fact, that it was upon the alleged appearances of the risen Christ that

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol. vi., pp. 360-65.

[2] Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, Eng. trans., London, 1873, p. 121.

the Christian Faith is built. Remove this central fact, and Christianity falls to the ground as an institution founded by God. It may survive as a useful but merely human institution and guide, but that is not the fundamental idea of the Christian religion. Renan says that there was a general feeling prevalent that great and good men never died. Hence, "On the day after His entombment this feeling was uppermost in their minds; the women above all, rendered Him service with tender devotion. 'Surely,' said they, 'angels surround Him and veil their faces in His shroud.' On that day the little company of Christians brought to pass the true miracle by the mighty love they bore Him, they brought Jesus to life in their hearts,—on that day for an hour Mary of Magdala upheld the whole fabric of Christian consciousness."[1] But this idea is absolutely at variance with all we know of the facts. Mary Magdalene expected the Resurrection no more than the Apostles who refused to believe her story, and the frame of all their minds was far from any idea of a Resurrection. But we are told by other critics, "It is all legend and invention". Schmiedel, who is no believer in the rising of Jesus from the dead, says: "The historian who will have it that the alleged appearances are due merely to legend

Renan and Mary Magdalene

All legend and invention

Schmiedel's reply

[1] *Les Apôtres*, cap. 1.

and invention must deny not only the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles, but also the historicity of Jesus altogether".[1] Strauss, another hostile critic, writes, in denying fraud upon the part of the Apostles: "No lie of their own invention could possibly have inspired the Disciples to proclaim the Resurrection of Christ with such steadfast courage amid the greatest danger, and Christian apologists rightly point to the amazing change from the utter despondency and hopelessness of the Apostles after the death of their Lord, to the enthusiastic faith with which at Pentecost, they proclaim Him to be the Messiah. How account, they say, for this, unless meanwhile an extraordinary event had taken place, which inspired them with courage, and convinced them that the crucified Jesus was indeed risen again."[2] The Scriptural narratives tell us that in preaching the Resurrection, the Apostles worked miracles to prove the truth of what they said. They were addressing themselves to strangers of every nationality, and asserting as a fact that with their eyes they had seen the Crucified alive again in the flesh. And they called upon God to bear witness to their truthfulness by miracles. We may well believe that such events occurred. As Thomas of Aquinas has said, "It

Strauss's reply

Apostles worked miracles to corroborate their assertion

[1] *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. iii., col. 4061.
[2] *Leben Jesu*, 3rd ed., ii., 685.

would indeed have been the most amazing of miracles, if without any miraculous signs, a few simple, unknown men had persuaded the world to embrace a faith so far beyond man's comprehension which entailed obligations so onerous, and anticipated a future so sublime".[1] Augustine of Hippo had written, "The Resurrection could ever have inspired the Disciples with faith in the Church, and in the future of Christianity; but we who have the Church before us, are certain that Christ rose from the dead. But if anyone believes that the Apostles wrought no miracles when they preached the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, this miracle alone would suffice us, namely, that the whole world believed without miracle."[2] And as the same need of corroboration existed when the eye-witnesses of the Resurrection were dead, so miracles continued to be worked, and still so continue, where the need arises. Christianity has not yet converted all the nations. The followers of Mohammed, of Buddha, of Confucius and of Brahma are in a similar position to that in which the Jewish and Roman world found itself at the death of Christ, and they need more than the uncorroborated word of man to change the faith they hold, for one which makes such great demands upon them. And Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever;

Thomas Aquinas's views

Augustine of Hippo's views

Need still the same

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, i., 6. [2] *Civ. Dei*, xxii., 5.

ever ready to meet the needs and weakness of His creatures. His arm is not shortened, nor has His goodwill grown weaker. And here we must draw to a close our examination of the Resurrection. That fact has been shown to be based upon the firmest of evidence. The origin of the Christian Church, its constant tradition, the conversions amongst Jews and Pagans, the testimony of these men, the evidence of the Scriptural writings, all alike place the fact amongst the most certain of historical events, and we have briefly considered many of the leading objections which have been urged against the Resurrection.

Conclusion

CHAPTER VII

THE ASCENSION

Object of the Ascension

And now we come to the alleged Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, in the presence of numerous witnesses.

The Ascension is a proof that Jesus, after rising from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. He rose with a spiritualised and incorruptible body, over which the ordinary laws of matter had no longer any control. Decay was an impossibility to that body. By virtue of its new nature it could die no more. Jesus, however, would give a further proof, by ascending finally into the Presence of His Father; as the Scriptures figuratively put it, "to sit at His right hand" for evermore. The Redemption was complete, and Heaven was to be opened to all believers.

Some early writers give evidence

The Ascension took place at Bethany in Galilee in the presence of the Apostles and a large number of witnesses. To it we have the constant witness of the Church, and tradition, and the Apostles' Creed. In the numerous quotations which we have

already given from the writers of the first two centuries in testimony to the Resurrection, the same class of evidence is given for the Ascension, and it would be useless and a waste of time to recapitulate them. We must, therefore, refer our readers to the quotations already given in previous chapters. And the same arguments hold good as to the value of this evidence for the Ascension as did for that of the Resurrection. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to the witness given in the New Testament writings, and deal with the objections which have been put forward. Matthew gives no account of the Ascension, neither does John. We must again remember that their works are not chronicles but memoirs, written for a special purpose, and that they only profess to record some of the sayings and doings of Christ, and that an omission does not mean a denial.

Mark's account

Mark tells us,[1] "So then after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God". And we have already shown that this by no means implies, as some critics say, that the event occurred on the same day as the Resurrection. The reference of John to Christ's appearance on the eighth day and subsequently in Galilee would corroborate our reading, were such corroboration needed.

Luke's account

Luke tells us, "And He led them out as far as

[1] Chap. xvi. 19.

Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven."[1] And in the Acts of the Apostles, the same writer tells us: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach. Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen. To whom also He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."[2] "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel. Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."[3] And later on, in relating the election of an Apostle to fill the place of Judas, Matthias is chosen because, amongst other qualifications, he had seen the Ascension.[4] That John knew of it is shown by his relating the speech of Jesus, in which the latter says, "And no

The Acts

John's references

[1] Chap. xxiv. 51. [2] Chap. i. 1-3. [3] *Ib.* 9-11. [4] *Ib.* 22.

man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven".[1] And again, "What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"[2] And again, in the appearance to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God".[3] Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians is held to be authentic by a large number of the best critics; and in the fourth chapter we read, "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.)"[4] And yet we are told that John and Paul say nothing of the Ascension. But it is urged, "How can a material body ascend? It is against the laws of gravitation." Once again the objection shows a total ignorance of the nature and properties of the risen body, which is no longer subject to the laws of gravitation. Again, we are told that the bodily Ascension localises and materialises Heaven. "The bodily Ascension into the sky in a cloud, apart from the

Paul's Epistle to Ephesians

Objection: The laws of gravity

Objection: Heaven is materialised

[1] Chap. iii. 13. [2] Chap. vi. 62. [3] Chap. xx. 17. [4] Vv. 8-10.

miraculous nature of such an occurrence, seems singularly to localise 'Heaven,' and to present views of cosmical and celestial phenomena suitable certainly to the age of the writer, but which are not endorsed by modern science."[1] Modern science has nothing to do with the supernatural. It is engaged in the study of the natural. And Heaven is not here said to be amid the stars or to have any relationship either to earth or sky. When Heaven is spoken of as being above, it is merely a figure of speech. And hence was it that in condescension to human weakness, and to impress the spectators with the fact that Jesus was leaving earth and had completed the term of His stay upon it, He arose from the earth and ascended skywards. Thus were they impressed through their senses of His departure to a world which does not come under the senses. Jesus Christ then ascended into Heaven, as the Church bears witness, and we have in its support a great mass of evidence from the early writers who if not eye-witnesses of that event were in personal communication with those who had been; and the Scriptural accounts give proof of the reality of that occurrence.

Conclusion

[1] *Sup. Relig.*, p. 845.

CHAPTER VIII

PROPHECY

And now once more to look back, after the death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. In a former chapter we have described the expectation of the Jewish and Pagan world that He should come who should break "the grim silence of God," and bring comfort and salvation to the human race. We refrained at that time from referring in detail to the Jewish prophecies, whereas we quoted from the Pagan. Here we intend briefly to refer to some of those ancient predictions, and then give those of Jesus Himself to His death, Resurrection and Ascension. Seen in the light of the accomplished fact, their prophetical character seems remarkable, and their reference to Jesus very striking. Moreover, the prescience of Christ, as seen in His foretelling all that later was to come to pass, corroborates our assertion that He was God. That His Disciples did not understand Him at the time is clear; at least until, in the realisation of it all, His words came back to their memories. And then to the proof of His Divinity obtained from

Looking back we see how Christ fulfilled the prophecies

the Resurrection and Ascension, was superadded corroboration in His foreknowledge of it, in His fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, so well known to them before, yet so sadly misunderstood. Let us then briefly, for space will permit no more, look first at some of the prophecies contained in the Old Testament which appear to refer to the Messiah, and then at the prophecies of His death, Resurrection and Ascension uttered by Jesus Himself during His ministry.

A. Hebrew Prophecies

To Abraham God promised that "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed".[1] From the Jews there was to spring some world-wide blessing. And this promise is repeated on several occasions.[2] It was always understood by the Jews as referring to the Messiah. And this blessing was to be brought by a living personality, at a time when the Jews should be under foreign rule. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh[3] come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."[4] Genesis

And Isaiah tells us that He shall be born of a Isaiah

[1] Genesis xxii. 18.
[2] See Genesis xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.
[3] Vulgate, "qui mittendus est". [4] Genesis xlix. 10.

virgin. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."[1] And a description of His character is given in the twelfth chapter, which begins, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots". And He was to be from the tribe of Judah, and the family of

Samuel

David, for, speaking to Jacob, He says: "And in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed". And Nathan is commissioned by God to say to David, "Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee a house. . . . I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I

Daniel

will be his father, and he shall be my son."[2] The time of His coming is prophesied in Daniel.[3] "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build

[1] Chap. vii. 14. [2] 2 Samuel vii. 11-14.
[3] Chap. ix. 24, 25.

Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks."

And it shall be when the sceptre has passed from Israel.[1] He was to be born in Bethlehem, as Micah foretells. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."[2] He was to be gentle and loving. "Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: he shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."[3] He shall be humble and lowly, and shall come to Jerusalem upon an ass. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation: lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."[4] And that the Messiah should die an untimely death, Daniel bears witness when he says, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him-

Micah

Zechariah

[1] Genesis xlix. 10. [2] Chap. v. 2. [3] Isaiah xlii. 1, 2, 3.
[4] Zechariah ix. 9.

self".[1] And the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah describes His sufferings and death. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. . . . He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."[2] And again: "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, that transgressions may be finished . . . and the saint of saints may be anointed. Know thou therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word to build up

[1] Chap. ix. 26. [2] Vv. 1-9.

Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. . . . And after sixty-two weeks, Christ shall be slain; and the people that deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war, the appointed desolation."[1] Clearly, Titus and the destruction of Jerusalem are here foreshadowed as occurring after the death of the Messiah. Jesus was put to death A.D. 30, and Titus destroyed Jerusalem A.D. 70.

The treason of Judas is foretold. "For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me." The traitor received the sop from Jesus just before the betrayal. Even the bribe of the priests is not forgotten. "And the Lord said to me: Cast it to the potter, a handsome price, that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver; and I cast them into the house of the Lord, to the potter."[2] He shall be scourged and spit upon. "I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me."[3] Again: "And they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar

[1] Daniel ix. 24, 25. [2] Psalm xli. 9. [3] Isaiah l. 6.

to drink".[1] "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots."[2] And the spear-thrust is foretold: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced".[3] And His body shall know no corruption in the grave, but shall be united to the soul in Resurrection. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."[4] And His Ascension is sung of by the Psalmists. "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men."[5] "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."[6]

On looking back at these prophecies, uttered many long years before the time of Jesus, and referring to the Messiah, it cannot but be a most striking corroboration of the proof already given, that Jesus is the Messiah who was to come; for in Him, and in Him alone, are fulfilled these wonderful predictions. He is their fulfilment, and His fulfilment of them stamps them for us as Divine.

B. The Prophecies of Jesus

And now let us briefly turn to the prophecies

[1] Psalm lxix. 21. [2] Psalm xxii. 18.
[3] Zechariah xii. 10. [4] Psalm xvi. 10.
[5] Psalm lxviii. 18. [6] Psalm xxiv. 7.

which Jesus Himself uttered respecting His coming death, Resurrection and Ascension. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew we read: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His Disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day".[1] And after the Transfiguration we read: "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead".[2] And again: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death. And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify Him, and the third day He shall rise again." And shortly before His Passion He said to His Disciples: "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified".[3] Mark bears witness also to this prophecy, for he tells us, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again";[4] and again the

Matthew

Mark

[1] Verse 21. [2] Matthew xvii. 9. [3] *Ib.* xxvi. 2.
[4] Chap. viii. 31.

same writer says: "For He taught His Disciples and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day".[1] Again, Mark relates the prophecy in his tenth chapter:[2] in the fourteenth chapter,[3] and in the twenty-eighth verse He predicts His Resurrection: "But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee". Luke witnesses to the prophecy of Jesus in his ninth chapter: "And He straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing," namely, that He was the Christ of God, "Saying, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day".[4] And again, in his eighteenth chapter[5] and in the twenty-second chapter[6] John likewise bears testimony to this prophecy, when he relates the saying of Jesus: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up".[7] And he narrates the prophecy made by Jesus as to His Ascension: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before";[8] and of His Crucifixion: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me".[9] Of the assertions made by Jesus Himself that He was God, we have evidence

Luke

John

[1] Chap. ix. 31. [2] Vv. 32-34. [3] Vv. 8-18. [4] Vv. 21, 22.
[5] Vv. 31-33. [6] V. 15. [7] Chap. ii. 19, 20, 21.
[8] Chap. vi. 62. [9] Chap. xii. 32.

in the fourth gospel. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I Am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him,"[1] for they knew that He claimed the Divinity; and again in another place He says, "I and My Father are one". Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them: "Many good works have I showed unto you from My Father; for which of these works do you stone Me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."[2] Yet once again: "Philip said unto Him, Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father."[3] And He proved His claim by the Resurrection. Here, then, we have evidence that Jesus prophesied all that was to come to pass; and looking back after the event, we see that His words were verified, and find further corroboration of His Divinity. But it may be objected: "How comes it, then, that the Disciples did not expect the Resurrection?" Mark shall first reply: "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him";[4] and Luke shall

Why the Disciples did not therefore expect the Resurrection

[1] Chap. viii. 58, 59. [2] Chap. x. 30-33. [3] Chap. xiv. 8, 9.
[4] Chap. ix. 31.

next make answer: "And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken".[1]

[1] Chap. xviii. 34.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Testimony of Reuss

We can hardly do better, in concluding our brief consideration of the Divinity of Christ, as established by the Resurrection, than quote the words of M. Reuss, one of the "higher critics," written in A.D. 1876 :—

"Apologetic (criticism) . . . may now spare itself the trouble of discussing seriously certain explanations derived in former days to get rid of the miracle (of the Resurrection), such as the supposition of a simple lethargy, from which Jesus recovered gradually; or that of a spectral illusion, organised by concealed leaders of the party, with the object of casting dust in the eyes of the Disciples; that of a lie, consciously circulated by the latter; and other similar suggestions, all as romancing, as they were singular; history and psychology, physiology and good taste, have long since condemned them. The expedient of reducing the fact to a simple myth breaks down, especially before the shortness of the time which elapsed between the event and the first preaching, and the recourse to

an illusion by way of vision is impossible, in face of the universality and strength of the conviction in the bosom of the Church. Even if no one of our Gospels had an immediate eye-witness to guarantee its story, there would remain the guarantee of St. Paul, whose affirmation can only be the reproduction of those of the personages whom he names. We may feel able to recognise that many things in this history are incomprehensible to us, that we shall never attain the power to render an account of the nature of the existence of the risen Jesus, that our reason is arrested at each step when it endeavours to conceive and reconcile the elements of the different narratives; nevertheless, this incontestable fact will always remain, that the Church, which has lasted for eighteen centuries, has been built on this foundation, that it is, therefore, so to speak, a living attestation of its reality, and that, in truth, it is she who has issued forth from the tomb of Christ, with whom, according to all probability, she would otherwise have remained interred for ever."[1]

We have endeavoured to place before our readers, so far as our space and time will permit, some portion of the evidence which establishes the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

None but God could have raised Himself from

[1] *Histoire Evangelique*, p. 701.

the dead. And Jesus had claimed the Godhead before His Crucifixion, and had foretold His Resurrection as a proof of His assertion. Now, had He not been God, then the Divinity in enabling Him to rise again would have been a witness to an untruth and an abettor in blasphemy, which is impossible. That He did so rise we have shown by numerous proofs taken alike from the circumstances under which the Christian Church came into existence, and from contemporary and immediately post-contemporary witnesses, as well as from an examination of the writings of the New Testament. That no step may remain unverified, we have in like manner established the reality of the existence and death of Jesus, and have adduced the evidence of Jewish and Pagan writers to those events. And as we have proceeded in our task, the various objections urged by Agnostics and Rationalists have been carefully considered and answers given, which we trust will be found of use in so serious a discussion. It has been our sincere desire and effort to deal with the whole subject in a fair and straightforward way; and to recognise the good faith, honour and learning of those from whom we differ; and to place their views honestly and without bias before our readers. If we have in any way done them the slightest injustice, it is at least unconsciously, and we shall

ever be ready to acknowledge and remedy such injustice. Profoundly convinced ourselves of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, we seek in a loving spirit to give "a reason for the Faith that is in us," in the hope that it may be useful to others. Nothing is to be gained by bitterness and lack of charity; such a course is opposed to the Spirit of Him who was gentleness, love and tenderness to all around Him.

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